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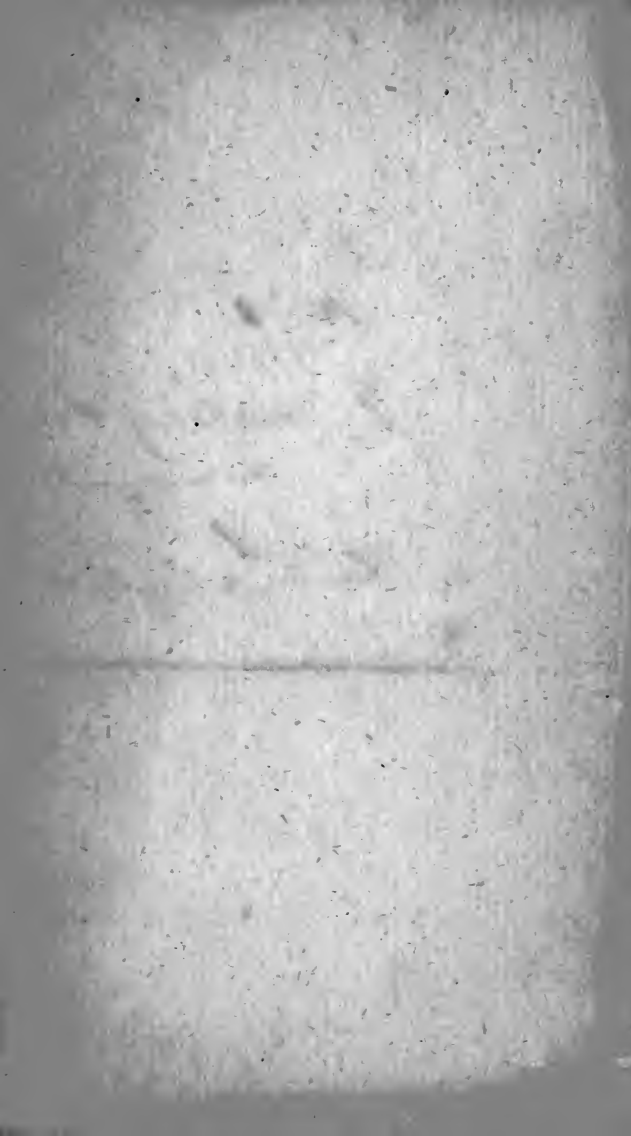
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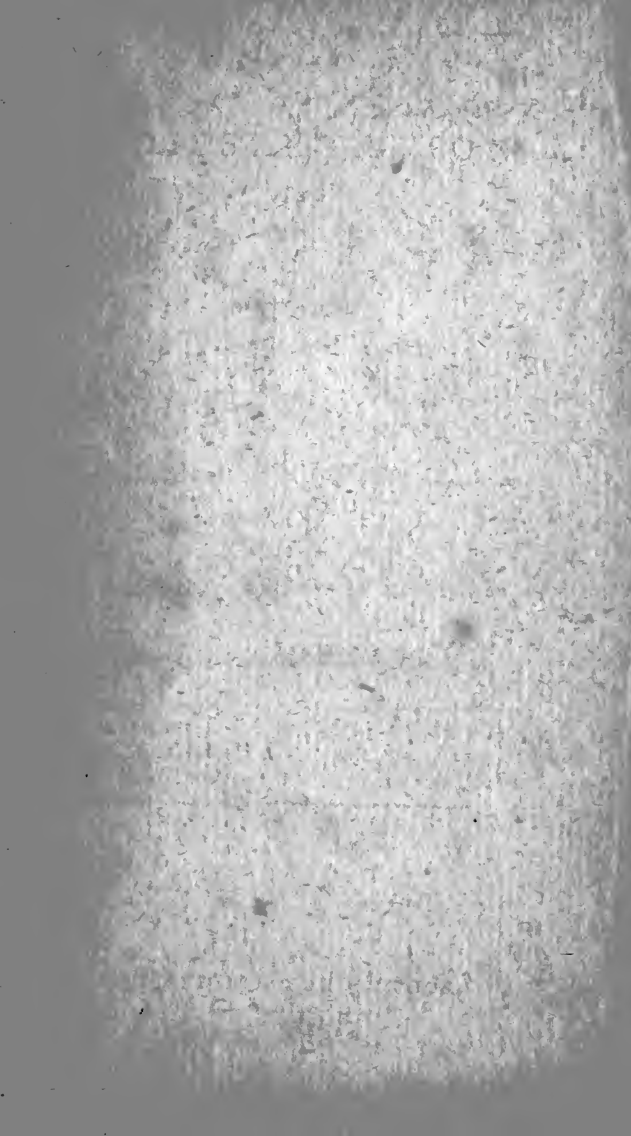
Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No. 1

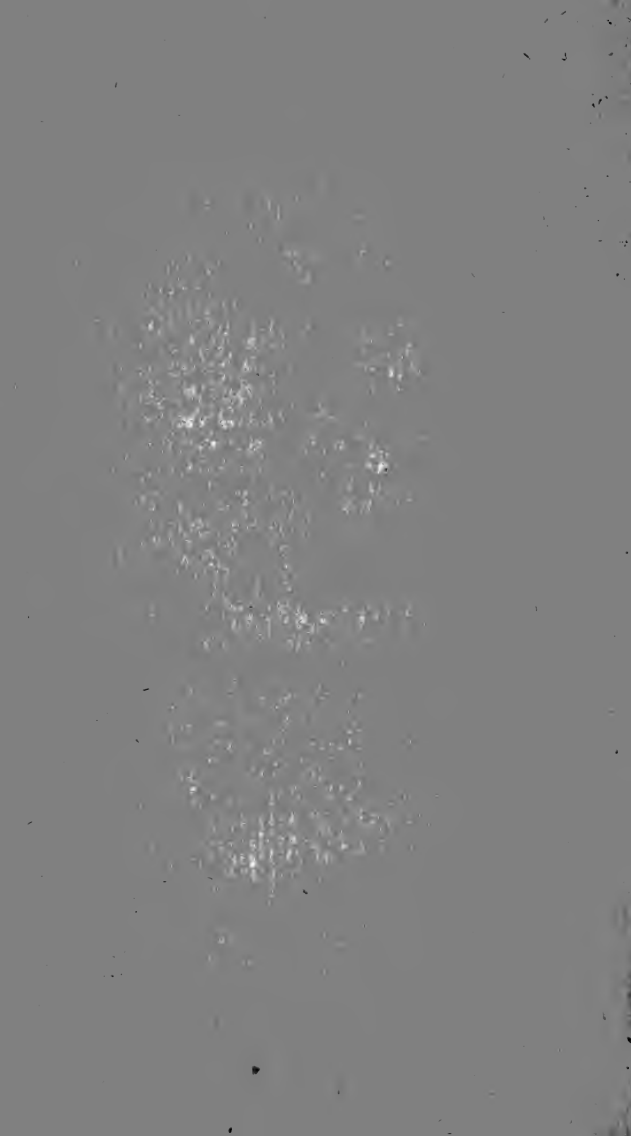
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A P P E N D I X

John TO *Paterson*.

A DISSERTATION

ON

B A P T I S M,

INTENDED

To expose the FALLACY and ABSURDITY of the Ideas of the Baptists concerning Circumcision and Baptism; the two churches of the Old and New Testaments; the two Covenants and two Seeds of Abraham;—containing a full answer to all that Messrs M'Lean and Booth have advanced on these subjects:

IN

A Series of Letters addressed to Mr M'Lean, of Edinburgh.

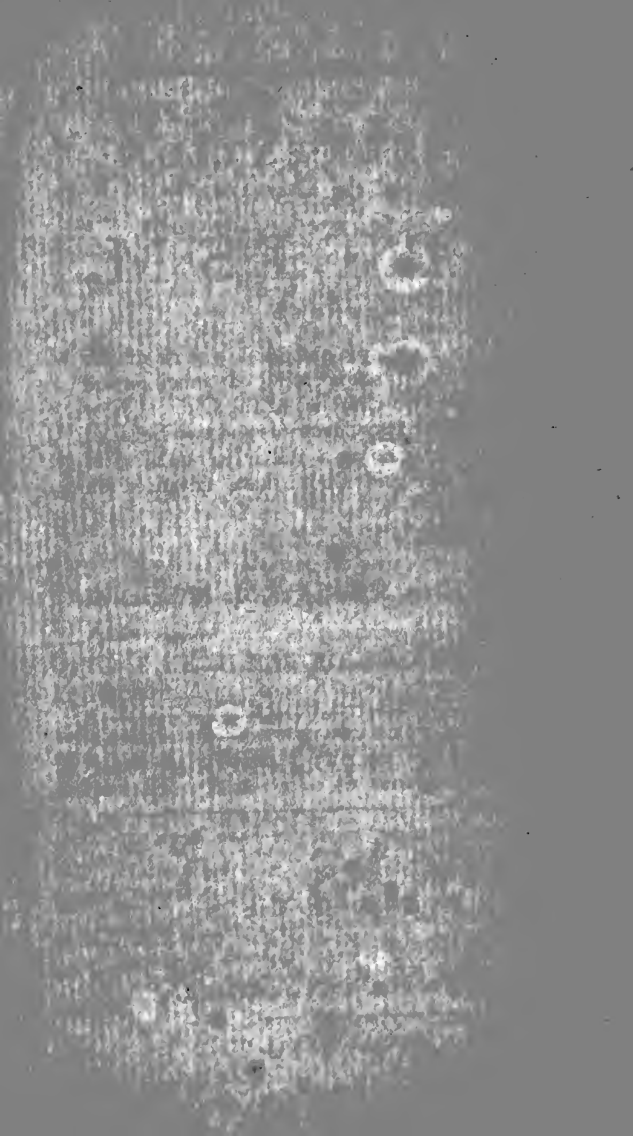
By ALEXANDER PIRIE,
Pastor of a congregational Church in Newburgh.

GREAT MEN ARE NOT ALWAYS WISE—THEREFORE
I SAID, HEARKEN TO ME; I ALSO WILL SHEW
THEE MINE OPINION. ELIHU.

P E R T H:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

M,DCC,LXXXVII.



P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the DISSERTATION ON BAPTISM is happy to find that his performance has met the approbation of the more sensible and impartial part of his readers. None seem to have opposed it save the ignorant who cannot, or the bigot who will not understand it. In consequence of this, according to promise, he has now published the following thoughts on the important subjects, mentioned in the Preface to the Dissertation: and as the writings of the Baptists, and many self-inconsistent Pedobaptists, have long tended to throw a veil over both testaments, darkening the council of God with words without knowledge, setting the divine dispensations at variance, and robbing the seed of Abraham of the rights derived from their father—it is hoped an attempt to remove this unhallowed veil from the sacred records, that the glory of the divine plan appear unveiled, will not be unacceptable to the lovers of truth.

The Dissertation, as might have been expected, filled the Baptists with rage and indignation. Of this the author had a striking proof. Soon after its publication, a preacher of that way from Edinburgh made a visit to Newburgh, with a view to obviate

obviate the impressions supposed to be made by that heretical performance. Preaching from Acts xvi. he declaimed against the author and his performance with all the virulence natural to the worsted party. He did one thing, however, very clever. To support the favourite idea, a river must be had to plunge the Jailor and his household in—a convenience which both nature and art had denied to Philippi. This difficulty, which would have puzzled a weaker head, he removed at once. Canal-digging is the fashion of the times. He cut a canal in a minute between the prison and the house of the Jailor, in which the converts were decently dipped; and that with no labour, save that of the lungs; and at no expence, save that of the truth.—Pity it is he had not tried his skill on a late occasion in the prison of Edinburgh; that a believing prisoner might not have run the risk of damnation by dying unbaptized.

A short time ago the same gentleman paid us another visit, bringing to us the gospel of his kingdom—“No infants ought to be baptized, or admitted into the kingdom of God opened to the Apostles.”—A gospel not to be found in all the sacred records. Jesus laid his hands on little children and blessed them, and thus administered to them an ordinance of the same kind with baptism, (Heb. vi, 2.) saying—Forbid them not to come to me,
for

P R E F A C E.

v

for of such is the kingdom of God. Forbid them, says the Baptist, for while they live they are to be viewed as of the kingdom of the devil, although when they die I graciously allow them the kingdom of heaven.

It is highly probable that the Baptist-ideas will prevail. Dipping is a novelty in this country. Mankind, too, are fond of a showy, ritual religion, chiefly if it points out an easy way to heaven. Such is that of the Baptists. What more showy and specious than their rite of immersion, in which they seem to place almost all that is important in christianity? And what at the same time more easy? One can be buried and rise again with Christ in a moment, without being crucified with him. Then heaven is opened, and all its glories are displayed. The weak, the splenetic, the fanciful, the fond of novelty, the lovers of pleasure must naturally embrace such a religion. The Socinians or half-Deists also, are mostly Baptists in principle. These two ideas combined will probably, in a short time, form the reigning religion. When the Son of Man comes shall he find faith on the earth. When men are taught to consider the Son of God as a mere child of old Adam, divested of divinity, their faith in him for a resurrection and life eternal can neither be strong nor lasting. Accordingly the Socinians tell us already that if there be a resurrection, it will be

accomplished

accomplished by the laws of nature, and not by the power of Christ. When, too, christians are taught to view their children as sons of the devil, having no connection with the faith of their parents, who will teach them the laws of Christ? laws with which they have nothing to do;—Add to these the practice of most parents, who baptize their children and think no more of the matter, and we see every thing tending to bring in the infidelity, which will issue in the destruction of the world.

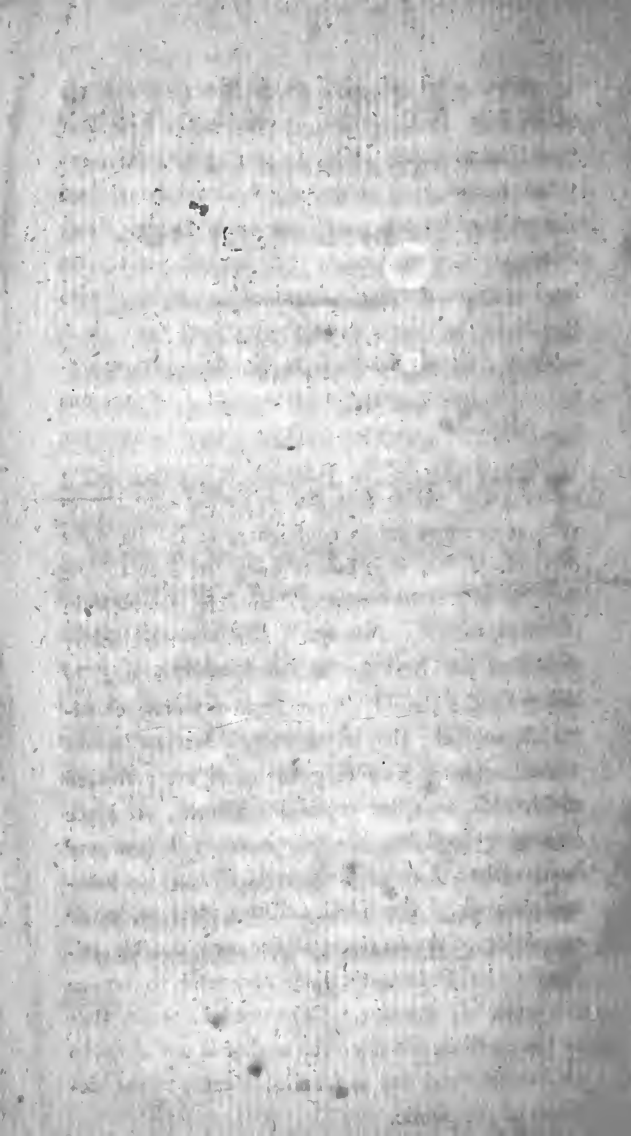
I have not the vanity to think that any thing I can say shall reach conviction to the Baptists. The illusions of fancy are not easily dissipated by reasoning and argument. The moment these people are dipped in water, they too often shut their eyes against the light of truth—to be opened no more: while the ear can listen with attention to nothing, but the cry of the party—Plunge and be saved. When the young disciple has been taught to exclaim against infant-baptism, which he calls Roman-sprinkling, and to cry what can infants do? Can an infant believe? He has learned his whole lesson, and is dubbed an adept in christian knowledge. He must not know that the Greek-plunging has just as little godliness in it as the Roman sprinkling; or that an adult can *do* no more to obtain a place in the kingdom of God than an infant of days. In vain you bid him listen to the instructions of Jesus

telling

telling him, that “ unless he receive the kingdom
“ of God as a little child, he can by no means en-
“ ter therein.” This doctrine believed would stain
the pride of his glory, and cast down the high thing
in the heart, which exalts itself against Jesus. So
hard a saying cannot be received by these, “ who
“ trust to themselves and despise others.”

As the Baptists, however, are constantly repeating their publications in support of so dangerous and fatal delusions, it cannot be deemed improper to vindicate the honour of truth, from time to time, in the same public manner, by manifesting her evidence to every man’s conscience, as in the sight of God. This, if it fails to open the eyes of the Baptist, will at least render him less excusable in the day of the Lord; while others may be thereby warned to avoid the snares of deception, so artfully laid “ by the sleight of men, and cunning crafti-
“ nefs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Although the following thoughts are addressed to Mr M’Lean only, yet as Mr Booth’s late piece entitled “ Pedobaptism examined” fell into my hands of late, I have animadverted also on that voluminous work. The novelty of some ideas, and their opposition to the sentiments of many reputable writers in the Pedobaptist line, may tend to render this work less popular. Convinced however, that he has truth on his side, the author is not afraid to publish his views and to submit his cause to the decision of the public.



SERIES of LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

MR M'L E A N.

LETTER I.

SIR,

I HAVE perused your *Letters to Mr Glas*, and also your *Defence of Believer-baptism*; in both of which pamphlets you have displayed talents for controversial writing of no inconsiderable lustre. An acute discernment qualifies you for spying out the weakness of your adversaries; while a clear and accurate expression assists you in exposing them to public view in the strongest point of light. A consciousness, too, of superior abilities, so apparent in your performances, prompts you to treat your antagonist with contempt, and to bring forward your own conceptions with such an assurance, as throws an air of confidence around

A

all

all you say; making the veriest shadow of argument pass with the unwary for solid reasoning, and mere assertion for truth. When to these qualifications we add your professed zeal for the purity of the divine institutions, and your avowed indignation against all who corrupt these sacred ordinances, expressed in the most animated diction, it must be allowed that you possess an assemblage of talents, which qualify you in an eminent degree as the leader of a party. If we except Messrs John Wesley and Adam Gib, the present age does not seem to furnish another champion equally qualified for the arduous task.

In the matter of infant-baptism, appearances would seem to indicate that you have gained a complete victory over your opponents, as they have retreated and left you master of the field. Many, indeed, seem to think that you have stated their arguments with fairness, and refuted them with evidence. Perhaps, however, this victory may be accounted the more easy, in that your antagonists have unwarily furnished you with weapons against themselves. From the premises they advance, your conclusion seems unavoidable. This circumstance
has

has doubtless contributed to the success of your cause; and on the blunders of your adversaries you have endeavoured to found your claim to the honours of a triumph.

But you know who said, "If a man striveth for masteries, he is not crowned, unless he striveth *lawfully*." Your Victory would have been honourable, nor should I have wished to tear a single laurel from your brow, had the weapons of your warfare been drawn from the armoury of truth. The man who has his quiver filled with these may speak unblushing to his foes in the gate. But as, on the contrary, error and mistaken views of the scripture seem to me to have furnished you with the keenest shafts of argument, your victory is unfairly purchased, and Justice cannot award you the crown. This you may think a very heavy charge; but as it appears to me to be well founded, I hope your love of truth will dispose you to allow me the same freedom you use with others, in exposing the falsity of the principles on which your reasonings depend—principles which seem to me void of truth, and altogether repugnant to the doctrines of the Apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ.

What I propose in this introductory epistle is only to examine your ideas with respect to the appearance of Christ's kingdom in this world. On this head you say "We cannot say how great a multitude may be saved, that are not included in the *appearance* of Christ's kingdom in this world, both infants and adults. It is probable the greatest number of his subjects are not included in that appearance*."

If by the kingdom of Christ you mean the baptist churches, the above assertions are undoubtedly true: no man can say how great a multitude will be saved, who never adopted the baptist principles. But by the appearance of Christ's kingdom in this world, is certainly meant all who profess to believe and obey him †. In this view, I would ask you, on what do you found this opinion? surely on some unwritten tradition, and not on scripture. We know where Jesus has said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my father." But the same Lord has added,

* Defence, &c. p. 72. 73.

† Or as you express it "such as confess the faith, and give evidence to their fellow-men that they know the truth."

added, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me
 "and of my words before men, of him will I also
 "be ashamed; &c." Christ's sheep are repre-
 sented as following him and suffering for his
 sake. So says Jesus; but what say you? By
far the greatest number of Christ's disciples ne-
ver profess his faith or obey him. Is this the
 man, who expresses such zeal against others
 for acting without scripture precept or example
in baptizing infants, while he himself directly
contradicts the most express testimony of Jesus
Christ? he who will be my disciple, says Jesus,
must confess me before men. No, says one of
his ministers, you will confess many before the
father, many adults, who never confessed you
or your words before men. Many shall reign
with you who never suffered with you!!! A
dangerous tenet this! It tends to persuade men
 that they need not expose themselves to inconve-
 niences and sufferings in professing the faith of
 Jesus. Though they deny him, or be ashamed
 of his words before men, yet if they have
a secret faith in him, they shall be saved.
 This is the damnable doctrine so generally be-
 lieved in the world, and sorry am I, that one,
 professing separation from the world, should

attempt to support the most dangerous article in its creed.

With respect to infants, you profess that you are "much inclined to judge favourably of the state of all infants dying in infancy." To this I reply, "Have you charity for them?" "Have it still; but let it be the charity of the truth." But on what part of the truth is this charity founded? Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But your charity says, he that neither believes nor is baptized shall be saved. Your brother D'Anvers also says, that infants are "incapable of regeneration." Yet they may be saved! The birth of the flesh, then, it seems is sufficient to form us for heaven! What strange heads some men have! *

But

* The notions of the baptists with respect to their infants put one in mind of the ideas of the ancient Romans. Many of their Emperors while alive were considered as devils, and that too justly; but as soon as they died, they were deified or ranked among the gods. This gave occasion to that famous saying of Vespasian when dying.—*If I am not mistaken I am going to be a god.*—In like manner, the baptists view their infants while living as children of the devil; but the moment they die, they are dubbed saints. Death, it seems is the principle of sanctification!

But you will say, when our Lord speaks of believing and being baptized as necessary to salvation, he means that these are necessary in adults not in infants. Right: this is certainly true. But little do you see where this will lead you. It robs you of your favourite argument against infant baptism. If Jesus, in this text, speaks of this method of saving adults, while he does not exclude infants; by the same rule of interpretation, when he says "Go teach and baptize the nations," he only makes instruction necessary to the baptism of adults, while he does not exclude infants from that institution. If the one text does not exclude infants from salvation, I own I know not by what rule the other can be explained as excluding infants from baptism. Thus the argument still holds good. If the established prerequisites to the salvation of adults will not hold with respect to the salvation of infants; neither will the prerequisites required to adult-baptism hold with respect to the baptism of infants. This reasoning I imagine, must be obvious to every impartial mind.

There is another thing strikes me in your reasonings concerning infants. You admit

that

the true invisible kingdom of God has infants in it, while you will not allow that there are any such in the churches of the saints, which constitute his visible kingdom on earth. A strange assertion indeed! You admit that the churches belong to the *appearance* of Christ's kingdom, or that they are visible representations of his invisible kingdom. Now what kind of a picture must it be, that wants a principal feature of the original! As nearly half of mankind die in nonage, all which, according to your charity, are of the election, far more than the half of the true, invisible kingdom of God, is made up of infants. It is impossible, then, that a baptist church, having no infants in it, can be a figure of that kingdom, of which infant salvation is the principal feature.

X Your charity for infants is highly inconsistent. If they die, it assigns them a place in heaven; if they live, it ranks them with the children of wrath. It shuts them out from the church below, but allows them the kingdom above. It gives the greater privilege, but withholds the lesser. In short, it will allow them any thing but water-baptism. So whimsical a thing

thing is your charity! It will be hard to reconcile her with herself; and

I may add, it is as difficult to reconcile her with the truth. The scripture says "Few are chosen": but your charity avers, that at least the half of the human race are chosen to salvation. This looks very like a lie, at least.—Again, she speaks of elect infants as among the unknown elect. How are they unknown, when she knows all that die in nonage are elected?

When I read your argument in support of the election of infants, I know not whether to be most surprised at its intrinsic weakness, or the air of confidence with which it is produced. Jacob was elected before he was born, Rom. ix. 11. yea, "before the foundation of the world, Eph: 1, 4. so that there must be elect infants*." But what was Jacob elected to? Why, to be the father of the seed to whom the promises were made. Could he be so while an infant? Surely no. Again, if this argument means any thing, it will prove that Esau was a reprobated infant, as it is equally said of him that he was hated before he was born. Now to what was he reprobated? Why to lose the birth-right.

* Defence of believer baptism. p. 73.

birth-right. Did he this while an infant? No: he sold it when a man.—Moreover, by elect infants, you mean “that part of the elect who “die in infancy.” Did Jacob and Esau die in infancy? If not; to what purpose is your argument? Jacob’s election to obtain a privilege when become a man, can never prove the election of such as die in infancy.—Again, if you conclude from this text, that there are elect infants, dying in infancy; you must also conclude that there are reprobate infants, who die in infancy, since it is as expressly said of Esau that he was hated, as of Jacob that he was loved, before he was born. In this case you must give up that charity, which inclines you “to “judge favourably of the state of all infants “dying in infancy.”—I may add, this argument will prove too much. The elect were chosen before the foundation of the world, *i, e,* when as yet they were not. Hence you must conclude, that since we were all nothing before we were infants, there must be elect nothings. A very odd argument indeed!

But you add, “there must be elect infants; “else there would be no elect at all, for all “mankind are infants before they become
“adults.”

“adults.” Fine reasoning! It is as if you had said, there must be manufacturing infants, else there would no manufacturers at all, for all manufacturers are infants before they become adults! Whether is this ranting or reasoning?

The truth is, your argument has no foundation in the text quoted. From God’s electing us to do or enjoy any thing when come to manhood, we cannot infer, that he has chosen us to do or enjoy that thing in infancy. Besides, your interpretation opposes every thing the scripture says concerning election. Paul tells us, Rom. vii. 29, 30. “Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate—whom he did predestinate them he also called, &c.” Now can infants be called? Or does he say any are predestinated, who are not called? Again, “God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth:” and can infants believe it? Such is the scripture-doctrine of election; and, to use your own words “I lay it down as an axiom, which I am confident none can overthrow”—That none are said to be elected to salvation but through the faith which saves.

The

The last proof you adduce is—"Suffer little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of God." This is no proof at all on your interpretation of it. If infants *literally taken* were here meant, this text would be much to your purpose, yea it would amount to a full proof: but in your view, "our Lord by these words does not so much intend the persons of little children, as these who resemble them in dispositions." How then, does this prove that the persons of little children dying in infancy shall be saved?

The truth is, infant-salvation is an absurdity in your system. You aver that the promise on which baptism stands is not to children but to believing adults. Now all the grace of God bringing salvation is contained in that promise, Acts, ii. 38, 39. iii, 25. { If the promise, then, does not extend to infants, how is it possible that infants can be saved?

X Other denominations believe the doctrine of infant-salvation; but they hold it consistently with other parts of their system. While they admit infants to a place in the kingdom above, they at the same time allow them a place in the kingdom of God below: whereas

your

your practice belies your principle. Why does not your charity extend to living infants as well as dead ones? You cannot say of any infant when born, that it will not die in infancy. Why then have you not charity for it, till it arrive at riper years?

By what I have written, I only mean to expose your weakness in perverting the scripture to prove a doctrine totally inconsistent with your system. I do not mean to say that infants dying in infancy are not saved. Saved they may be, for who can set bounds to the grace of God, who saves whom he wills. As he commanded the infants of believing parents to receive the sign of the everlasting covenant, there can be nothing improbable in the supposition, that he proposes to convey to them the grand blessing of that covenant, even life eternal: and as they die through the sin of Adam, it is probable they will be made alive, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But that all infants dying in infancy shall enjoy this salvation, is a tenet I have not yet found in scripture. To assert it then is to encroach on the sovereignty of God, who "has mercy on whom he will have mercy," and has power to make one

"one vessel to honour and another to disho-
 "nour." I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

I Now proceed to examine the foundation, on which all your reasonings against Infant-Baptism are built. These all stand upon a very questionable hypothesis—That the Old and New Testament Churches are totally distinct the one from the other. These societies, you imagine, are different. 1st. In their constitution and *design*,—the former being a *type*, of which the latter is the *antitype*; 2dly. In the covenants on which they were established—the one upon the *Old* covenant, the other upon the *New*; 3dly. With respect to the seeds, who were members of these churches, and to whom these covenants were given, the Old Testament church being made up of the *carnal* or *fleshly* seed of Abraham, who were only *typically* holy, as the New Testament church consists of the *spiritual* and truly holy seed of Abraham; These differ with

with regard to the *manner* of admission to their communion; seeing the *fleshly* birth entitled men to the privileges of the former, whereas the *spiritual birth* or faith in Christ Jesus can only entitle any to a place in the church of the New Testament.—These are the leading ideas of your system: let us see if they be to be found in the scriptures of truth.

1st. You view the Old Testament church as of an earthly, carnal constitution, having carnal ordinances, and so only typical of the New Testament church, which is wholly spiritual, the antitype of the other.—One part of this assertion is true: The Mosaic church had carnal ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary. Her whole system of sacrifice; her laws and government, were shadows of good things to come. Thus she was a *type*; but where she is said to be a type of a New Testament church, strictly so called, I cannot find.

There is a church, indeed, mentioned in the New Testament, which is called “the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are enrolled in heaven; the whole family in heaven and earth; the one body, having the one spirit,” whereof Christ is the head.

head. This society is the true church or kingdom of Jesus Christ, into which no hypocrite nor unclean thing can enter—A church unseen as yet by mortal eyes, but will be visible, when Christ comes the second time, to gather all his saints into one place. Of this church the Mosaic one was a figure: but this is not the New Testament church or kingdom, as we find Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in it, who surely lived under a former dispensation. When we come to this church we come to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23, 44. and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. This church, then, exists under both Testaments, and so cannot be called either the Old or New Testament church. She is a kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world, to the promise of which all true believers have been coming from the beginning to this day—A kingdom, to which the prophets and apostles bear witness, which shall appear, when the present state of things is past. This church is wholly spiritual; her members are the truly holy seed, heirs of everlasting and heavenly privileges.—But the New Testament church strictly so called, means
these

these societies, which the apostles planted, called churches of the saints, professing the faith and keeping the commandments of Jesus. Every such society or church, you justly call “a *visible representation* of that one body which is *invisible*” in its present state. A church of this kind is not wholly spiritual, as you admit that “hypocrites and unbelievers may enter into” her.

Was the Old Testament church, then, a type of a church of this description? It is absurd to say so. Since every New Testament church is by your own account, a *visible representation* or a *type*, how can she be the *antitype*. It seems the Mosaic church was the type of a type, and the New Testament churches both type and antitype! What nonsense will men speak when they do not think!

The truth is, both these churches are of the same kind—both are visible—both types or visible representations of the unseen and heavenly kingdom—both are schools, in which the children of God are born, nursed and trained up into a meetness for the everlasting inheritance. If the one had carnal ordinances, the other still has some such. If hypocrites and

unbelievers were found in the antient church, many of Israel who were not *Israel*, so it is in the New. Christ will not gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity until he come again—In none of these respects, then, can these two societies be distinguished from one another. Both are included in the *appearance* of Christ's kingdom in this world. In all the states of this kingdom, he is the king, the judge and lawgiver—the ruler of the fear of God. “*Now* is my kingdom not from “hence”—this supposes that he had a kingdom before *now*.

Where then lies the difference between these two churches?—Paul tells us—“Life and Immortality is brought to light by the gospel,” the gospel has thrown a superior lustre around the doctrines of life and immortality—“We are “not come to Sinai but to Zion,” not to hear the voice of terrible words, but the milder sound of love—“We have not received the “spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption crying Abba, father, the spirit of love and of a calm mind. “The “priesthood being changed, there must of necessity be a change of the law we have got another high priest, who has other sons, and consequently.

consequently all the laws executed by, and connected with the priesthood of Levi, the public ordinances of worship, order and discipline, must be changed. We are come nearer the heavenly Jerusalem, that of the living God, as the gospel affords us brighter prospects of her glories, so that our faith substantiates things unseen. Every cause of enmity between Jew and Greek is slain by the cross, so that Gentiles are no more called strangers and foreigners, but fellow-burgesses with the Saints and of the very household of God.—In these and such like respects, the New Testament church differs from the Old.

But they do not differ as the visible or typical and true or spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. This true invisible kingdom, consists of real believers, worshipping God in spirit, has existed in both, and has always been the true seminal part of each. It has had and still has its seat in the heart, unseen of men: and with respect to visibility, it is yet to come.

Christ's kingdom will only appear when he appears himself; he "shall judge the quick and dead," says Paul, "at his appearing, and his kingdom." Tim. iv. 1. This has been the object

ject of hope under both Testaments: "The
 " restitution of all things God hath spoken of
 " by the mouth of his holy prophets, since the
 " world began." If Peter says we look for a
 new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwel-
 leth righteousness, Isaiah says the same thing.
 The patriarchs looked for an heavenly country
 as well as the apostles. This heavenly king-
 dom is not yet come: Paul only said "The Lord
 " will bring me to his heavenly kingdom;" and
 Peter tells us that an abundant entrance shall
 be ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom
 of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—How,
 then, it has entered the brains of mortals to
 say that a New Testament church is the true
 spiritual, everlasting kingdom of Christ, is sur-
 prising. A church of this kind is only an ap-
 pearance, likeness or figure of this kingdom,
 in her visible capacity; and is the same with
 that of Israel in a different dress or under dif-
 ferent modifications. Instead of saying the
 Old Testament and New Testament church, it
 is more proper to say the Old Testament and
 New Testament state of the church. In both
 states she is a visible society, having many hy-
 pocrites and unbelievers mixed with the few
 chosen

chosen in her. Abraham is the father of both. The promise given to him, even the everlasting covenant is the "root and fatness of this olive," as his seed has been her staminal branches in both states. The Jews were the first called both under the law and under the gospel. The apostles as well as the prophets were Jews by birth. The Gentiles are only wild scions ingrafted into this olive. To this church howbeit, they have always had access; at first in the character of "strangers and foreigners," but now as "fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs and of the same body."—In both states she is a figure, a visible representation of the coming or everlasting state of the kingdom of Christ. In both her office-bearers, ordinances of worship and place of assembly are earthly, typical and temporary. In both her candlestick is visible and can be removed out of its place. Rev. ii, 5. Her table of shew-bread, and laver of washing, is the same, all are *signs* of spiritual and heavenly things, but are not the heavenly things themselves. Only at the end of this state of things is the New Jerusalem to come down from God out of heaven. The *former* state of the church, then, is not so properly called

called a type by figure of the *present*, as of the unseen and coming kingdom or church of Jesus. The Mosaic church had "an example" and shadow of heavenly things patterns of "things in the heavens," but these heavens, we are told by Paul, are the place into which Christ has entered, "now to appear in the presence of God for us." These heavens, then, are not on earth.

There are some of these things prefigured by the law already come. The incarnation, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and glorification of Christ are past: but the assembly or church of which the Old Testament one was a figure is not yet come. These facts did not take place in a New Testament church, although a profession of faith in them entitles us to a place in a church of that description. These glorious facts are expressed in the ordinances of that church, and recognized as already past, in accomplishment of the ancient promises. Yet this makes no material difference in the constitution of the church visible. Formerly she exhibited or represented these facts as *about to come*, in all her ordinances; now she recognizes them in all her institutions

as *come*, yet in both states she looks forward to a new state of things, the new heavens and the new earth, to appear at the time of the restitution of all things; and in both she is a figure of the church of the first-born to be gathered together on that glorious occasion.

But did not Christ say “The kingdom of heaven is at hand? And does he not mean thereby the gospel church?—I answer, as the gospel church is nearer in point of time to the coming kingdom, which she has a more clear revelation, and a more sure and visible ground of hope laid in the resurrection of Christ from the dead—as also she has far less of an earthy and carnal nature in her laws and ordinances, the spiritual intention of which is more easily understood,—As, finally, she has no earthly kingdom between her and the heavenly one, to engage her attention to this world, or intercept her views of future things,—she may be called the kingdom of heaven with respect to the former state of the church. Yet still the true kingdom is the object of hope, and will only appear with her lord. The church now is in the wilderness, where, like Israel, she
seeks

seeks a city to come, and a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

The true model, platform or pattern of these societies, called christian churches, is to be sought for, not in the Mosaic constitution of a church, but in the synagogues of the Jews, erected after the return from Babylon. These associations or churches were many in number, similar with respect to office-bearers, laws of discipline, order and worship, and each having an independent authority, or a power in itself over its own members in matters of government, so that no member of one synagogue was amenable to the jurisdiction of any other synagogue whatever. Moreover, all of them considered themselves as members of the general assembly meeting at the old Jerusalem, towards which they always worshipped, even in the most distant regions, and to whose laws they were all responsible.—This is the most exact model of the christian churches. These borrowed from the synagogue, their offices, office-bearers with their names, general laws of order, and independency in point of authority. In profession they are all members of “the general assembly, the church of the first-born”

“born” meeting in heaven, to which all their worship is directed, and to whose laws every man is accountable.—As the Messiah had proposed to establish this model or plan of government and order in his New Testament kingdom, the erection of synagogues so long before was a measure pregnant with wisdom. Thus the prejudices of none were shocked with novelty; but the mind of all were prepared to submit to a system, which made no material alteration in the plan already established among them.

The tabernacle of Moses, indeed, was a figure, not of any visible church in the present state of Messiah’s kingdom, but of that kingdom at large, including heaven and earth.’ The most holy was the figure of the heavens, into which Christ has now entered to purify the heavenly things with his own blood. Besides this there was the holy place and the court of the tabernacle. In the former stood the altar of incense, the candlestick and the table of shew-bread; in the latter, the altar of burnt-offering and the laver, where the business of sacrifice and washing was performed. Between these also a separating veil hung.

C

This

This was a figure, for the time then present, of the state of things in the church on earth.

Into this church men have always entered by baptism with water and faith in the blood of atonement.

The altar of sacrifice and the laver were placed over against the door in the outer court of the tabernacle. So men entered while the law stood; so we enter under the gospel. Formerly men saw but the figurative priest and sacrifice. Now the true priest has offered the true sacrifice, and that in the external part of the church in the view of Jew and Gentile. The cross is exposed to the view of all—Thus we see a better sacrifice and a better priest; but still they are in the external court, and this court is given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. Men prophaned the external services of religion under the law: they do so still. The cross, its doctrines and sacrifice have been abused to the most pernicious purposes. Speculating on these subjects, to the Jew they have been a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness. Both have trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. In many forms, other priests and other sacrifices

have

have been set up in this place, to the disparagement of the true One.

Yet still the true Israelite must enter the house of God by this door—by faith in the sacrifice and the laver of washing. This is the established plan of heaven. By external ordinances we enter into the holy place, the place of enjoyment, the place of eating with God, walking in the light of the candlesticks or churches, eating the sacrifice and shew-bread, and offering up the incense of prayer and praise, set on fire by a spark of love from the cross of Jesus.—The outer-court is the place of speculation; the internal, the scene of *enjoyment*.

By the above view is not meant, that the real disciples of Jesus should join in religious fellowship with such as abuse and pervert the external services of christianity—who corrupt the faith or worship of the gospel. False Israelites set up idols in the house of God of old, and offered sacrifices which God abhorred. Some joined the worship of Jehovah with the worship of idols; professing to fear the Lord, yet serving their own gods. Heathens, too, broke into the temple, defiling it by their false worship. With such no true Israelite was al-

lowed to join in fellowship : from such he must turn away. In like manner, even in the apostolic age of christianity, many corrupters of the faith and worship of the gospel sprung up ; from whose religious fellowship Paul charges the true disciples of Jesus to turn away. He foretels a still greater apostacy in the latter times under a kind of profession of christianity. Yet still he does not allow us to give up with an open profession of the faith of Christ or to forsake the observation of the external ordinances of worship or discipline, he has instituted. This is to be done, indeed, in a way of separation from the corrupters of that faith and of these ordinances : yet still it must be done ; and wherever a few are thus met together to worship in the spirit and according to the truth of the gospel, there Jesus has assured us he will be with them to bless them.

In my next I shall review your ideas of the two covenants, on which, you suppose, these two churches were founded. I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

Letter

LETTER III.

IN your 7th letter to Mr Glas you divide the Abrahamic covenant in two parts, the one called the *Old covenant*, the other the *New*. The former “ was only a *temporal* relation betwixt God and a particular nation, which is “ now *done away* and come to an end. It was “ *carnal and earthly*—in its *worship*—*sacrifices*— “ *mediator*—*priests*—*sanctuary*—*promises* and *subjects* ;” whereas “ the new covenant is an eternal relation betwixt God and his people “ from among all nations, and is therefore called an *everlasting covenant*. It is spiritual and heavenly, in its worship, sacrifice, mediator, priest, sanctuary, promises and subjects. The “ old covenant, with all its typical œconomy, “ was founded on the temporal promise made “ to Abraham concerning his fleshly seed. p. “ 62. This is called the *Old covenant*, on account of the temporal relation betwixt the “ Lord and that nation, which is now done away. —The *law*, on account of the law there-

“ in given to them.—And the first *testament* on
 “ account of the typical adoption and the tem-
 “ poral inheritance. On the contrary,

“ When the fulness of time was come,
 “ and God proceeded to fulfil the spiritual
 “ promise, he did it by means of another co-
 “ venant, with Abraham’s spiritual seed of all
 “ nations. *X* This is called the *New covenant*, in
 “ reference to the other, which was made Old,
 “ and the new spiritual relation betwixt God
 “ and that new nation, made up from among
 “ all nations, kindreds and tongues.—The
 “ *New testament*, on account of the true adop-
 “ tion and the heavenly inheritance, of which
 “ Christ the first-born is both testator and heir.”

Such is your account of the two covenants; and it must be owned, it is more just than many other given on that subject. Yet in my view it is still highly imperfect,—inaccurate in some parts, in others unjust.—It gives no distinct idea of the word *covenant*—It makes the two covenants totally distinct in all respects—It makes the right of the native Jew to the land of Canaan cease at the commencement of the new covenant—It excludes the spiritual seed from any claim to the promise of the earth—

It makes the two seeds, to whom the promises were made and the covenants given, totally distinct.

If we would have just views of this important subject; we must attend to the matter of the Abrahamic covenant, and trace it up to its origin. The *matter*, or thing conveyed by that covenant, is a blessing. Thou shalt be a blessing, says God to Abraham, and when the Gentiles are taken into that covenant, the blessing of Abraham is said to come upon them.

Gal. iii, 14. This blessing was first revealed to man in Eden, when to support the hope of the trembling sinner, God assured him that a seed of the woman should appear, in due time, to destroy the Devil, the murderer of mankind, and to abolish all his works, even sin and death and woe. This promise was called God's covenant so early at least as the days of Noah, since God says to him "with thee will I establish my covenant." Gen. vi. 18. It was accordingly established in the line of Shem, thro' whom it descended to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and David.—Here I shall make the following observations.

1st. Although this promise at first seemed entirely simple, respecting one blessing only; yet, in its course, it unfolded itself into two capital blessings, which parted again into still lesser subdivisions. Like the river of Eden; it was simple in its origin, yet issuing from the garden, it divided itself into various heads. It was never determined to confine its influences to a nation: no; by it all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Nor did it contain only spiritual and heavenly blessings, as is commonly imagined, but all temporal and earthly too. Paul's account of Godliness ever was and ever will be true—It “is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

As is the *curse* or condemnation so is the *blessing*. The curse was twofold, extending to the life of man and the earth by which his life was supported. The free gift, then, or the blessing must have extended both to the earth and to the life of man; otherwise it could not have been commensurate with the curse; whereas Paul assures us that it does not only reach as far as the condemnation, but it “much more abounds.” Before the days of Noah, such as believed the
 promise

promise had not only their spirits supported by the hope of life and immortality through the seed, or enjoyed friendly intercourse with God, walking with them in the institutions symbolically exhibiting the way to life; but earthly blessings were also given them. Outcasts from the church were made fugitives and vagabonds in the earth, unhappy even in the present life, otherwise why is it considered as a curse to be driven out to the land of Nod. The covenant ever was given to establish the earth: and when unbelief in and contempt of that covenant had filled the earth with violence, so as to destroy its constitution by the flood, it was renewed by virtue of the covenant established with Noah.

However simple, then, the promise might appear before Noah's time, yet in his days it was obviously divided into two heads. The covenant established with Noah contained, *first*, a promise of life and happiness to man, furnishing him with provision for the support of the individual and the continuance of the species; assuring him, at the same time, that he would require an atonement for the life of man, first by the blood of beasts and then by the blood of him, who is every man's brother, who, by
dying

dying should destroy the devil, the shedder of man's blood, the murderer from the beginning : —A farther explanation of the manner, in which the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. *Secondly*, This covenant contained a promise of blessings to the earth, taking off the curse from the ground, and securing the regular interchanges of the seasons, while the earth remains. Thus, according to his father's prediction, Noah comforted mankind " concerning their work, and the toil of " their hands, because of the ground, which " the Lord had cursed."—Both parts of the promise are briefly described in Gen. ix. 11. " I will establish my covenant with you ; nei- " ther shall all flesh be cut off any more by the " waters of a flood, neither shall there be a " flood any more to destroy the earth."

These two promises, branches of the great original, like two streams, run through the whole earth, diffusing blessings among all nations—peace on earth and benevolence to men. From these proceeded all the light, the knowledge and happiness of mankind in succeeding ages.—The one had its sign, taken of security in the clouds ; the other in the sanctuary. The
rainbow

rainbow was the pledge of security for man's natural life and for the fertility of the earth; the blood of sacrificial beasts was the sign of God's determined purpose to take vengeance on the murderer of man by destroying him and his works, sin and death, until the seed should come, whose blood should give the full assurance of faith in this purpose, on which all the hope of men depends.—Thus all the nations knew God, although they did not continue to glorify him as God, nor liked to retain him in their knowledge.—Thus he was, not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; all having an equal revelation, not only of his power of creation and preservation of the universe, but of his power to salvation.

The *earthly* and *temporal* part of the promise was evidently the most visible and easily understood. Every thing concerning the present life of man and the fertility of the earth is perfectly obvious, as its accomplishment was just about to begin. But as the coming of the seed and of the salvation in him was then at so vast a distance, this event is revealed in figurative and darker language. The method of atonement by the blood of beasts is pretty clearly marked

marked, as this was already in use, and was soon to be more explicitly and fully established in the line of them: but the atonement by the blood of Jesus is expressed in terms more ambiguous—by shedding the blood of the murderer of man by man, even by the hand of him, who is every man's brother.

✕ But the principal stream of this river of bliss was destined to run in the line of Shem. In his veins the fluid, the seed conveying salvation, did flow, and through his generation it must flow for many ages. Hence, full of this idea, the spirit of inspiration in Noah said in terms of rapture, “Blessed be Jehovah, the “God of Shem”!”

Accordingly, when it had proceeded in its course to the time of Abraham, the God of the promise appears to him, assuring him that the blessing was in him. Now when we see it making its appearance in him, still it contains a twofold blessing, the one earthly and temporal, the other spiritual and eternal—“To thy seed will I give this land—In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”—Both these promises were confined to the seed of Abraham, and that in the line of Isaac.

The

The seed of Isaac, the children of the promise, inherited Canaan; and of him as concerning the flesh the seed came, to whom the promises were all made, and in whom the nations are blessed.

While so large a portion of the earthly blessing continued in connection with the spiritual and run parallel with it, a side-branch of that stream diverged towards Arabia to bless Ishmael and his descendents, where it has run and shall continue to flow while the earth remains,

—“Also of the son of the bond-woman will I
“make a great nation, because he is thy seed.”

Gen. xxi. 11, 13.

In the time of Isaac another part of the temporal promise was conveyed to Esau, “Behold,” says his father, “thy dwelling shall be the fountains of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.” This blessing continued with the descendents of Esau or Edom, till the Edomites were finally so incorporated with Israel, that they were no more a distinct people.

2dly, From the above detail, I think it is evident, That the *temporal* blessing never was wholly separated from the *spiritual*, but the promise of earthly blessings, in all its branches;

has ever had a radical connection with, and its origin in, the promise of the SAVING SEED. These two have been always so intertwined together as never to be separated. In proof of this, we never find any earthly blessing conveyed to any, but by or through him, in whom the seed was for the time present. Thus when a blessing was given to the earth and every living thing upon it, it was disposed through Noah, in whom the seed at that time was. In him God established his covenant. If Ishmael received a blessing, it was because he was Abraham's seed. ✕ Esau had a blessing disposed to him, but it was through Isaac, in whose loins was the seed of the promise. None but the fathers of whom Christ was to come, could convey the blessing to their children; and in every such conveyance we find both the promises united: the same testator conveys both. The promise of the seed, indeed, was of such a nature that it could not be divided: one son of a family only could be progenitor of the Messiah. But the earthly promise could be, and accordingly was divided. Ishmael had a share of the earth granted him as well as Isaac; Esau as well as Jacob; and all the twelve sons of Jacob
had

(had each his portion of Canaan assigned him.) Yet all these were radically connected with the seed, and the principal branch of the stream of earthly bliss was never separated from that family in whom the seed was. Of Judah was Shiloh to come, and Judah had the most distinguished portion in the holy land. David, for the same reason, was raised to be king over Israel, and had the royalty entailed on his family. The Most High had his abode where the seed was, and there the river united its streams of earthly and spiritual bliss to make glad the city of God. Thus it must have been; for Paul assures us that to the seed even Christ, all the promises were made; and consequently he alone had a right to dispose of them.

3dly, Hence arises the propriety of calling Jesus Christ the covenant of the people. The blessing has been always lodged in him, and so connected with him, that it cannot be separated from him. Men have been, and shall be blessed in him: and all connections between God and men have been founded in him.

But to obtain just ideas of this subject we must attend to the scripture account of the

word rendered *covenant*, and of the phrase making a covenant between God and man.

✱ The *promise* on which the covenant is established is sometimes called *covenant*; as in Ps. 105. 8, 9, 10, 11. There God is said to make a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the covenant is—"Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance."—Again the *law* established on the promise is called the covenant. Thus the law written on stones is called the covenant and tables of the covenants given to Israel at Sinai.

Deut. v. 3, 9, 15. In this sense Paul uses the word in his epistles to the Hebrews. By the old covenant he means the law written on

stones*; by the new, the law written on the heart. Heb. viii. 9, 10.—Finally, the seal or

that which ratifies the covenant is called the covenant. Thus circumcision is called the co-

venant in Abraham's flesh. Gen. xvii. 11, 13.

The blood, too, of the sacrifice slain to ratify the covenant at Sinai is called "the blood of the covenant." Exod. xxiv, 8.

The

* The whole law of Moses is said to be written on stones, as the ten foundation-articles of that law were so written.

The foundation of these different ideas must be sought for in the original word BERITH, rendered *covenant* in our version. This word is evidently derived from BARR, *to select or chuse, to purify or make clean*. Sin is the pollution of the world; and as God proposed to take it away by a sacrifice, every sacrifice for sin is called BERITH, the purifier. The blood of Jesus, the Son, cleanses us from all sin. Hence he is called God's BERITH; and as every sacrifice was selected or chosen of God for that purpose, hence the word denotes the chosen, and Jesus is most emphatically called elect, chosen, as selected and appointed for the great purpose of cleansing from all unrighteousness. He is given as a Berith to the people. This sacrifice is God's covenant. Hence God is said to give or make a covenant with any, by shedding the blood of a sacrifice, and people are said to enter into covenant with him, by having the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on them. X Thus all God's saints are said to enter into his covenant by sacrifice. Ps. l. 5. There never was any other way appointed of God by which men could enter into his Berith, or take hold of his covenant: and all who are for

sprinkled with the blood of the covenant are said to be sanctified, called-saints, or set apart for holy purposes. God's Berith is the fountain of holiness.

It is easy now to see the reason why the promise is called Berith, as the promises or the blessings are all in Christ Jesus, the true Berith or purifier. So when God gives his promise or covenant to Abraham he expresses it thus—"I will give my Berith between me and thee," Gen. xvii. 2. To give Christ in his seed was to secure the blessings promised to him and his seed.—Again, He who was to be God's Berith to the people was also to be a "leader and commander to the people; a judge, "lawgiver and king" to direct the sanctified, such as had entered into God's Berith, in the way leading to the promised inheritance. This he could not do but by a law: and hence the law is called Berith or covenant, as obedience to it rises from faith in the Berith as slain to confirm the promises, all the blessings of which are lodged in him, and conveyed through him.

What we translate "making a covenant" is in the original CARAT Berith, *cutting off the purifier.* By cutting off the sacrifice from the land

land of the living, the promised blessing is secured, and all who are sprinkled with the blood are engaged thereby to yield the obedience of faith to him who has bought them with his blood, and so is their Lord and sole lawgiver. So expressive is the phraseology of scripture!

From what has been said it is easy to see that God's covenant is very different from that so called among men; even a deed of two or more parties agreeing mutually on certain terms and conditions. Here both parties are on a level; both having rights, which they can either alienate or not at pleasure. But God alone makes or gives his covenant—"I will give my covenant between me and thee." So when the New Testament speaks of God's covenant, it employs a word (*diatheke*) which always signifies the deed of a single person making a conveyance of his property to another in such a way as he sees proper. This may be done by grant, disposition or testament: but as God, proposed to convey his property to men by the death of his son, who is hence called a testator the deed of conveyance is hence called a testament by Paul.—This testament not only contains a free and sovereign grant of privileges,
but

but also a law expressing the tenure by which they hold possession of these privileges. This law results from the very nature of the thing. Faith in the covenant, and a willingness to hold or receive its privileges as a free gift must be necessary to the receiving these benefits, and gratitude or love to the giver must be the native fruit of this faith. Hence, as love naturally yields obedience, love is said to be the fulfilling of the law. To despise the covenant, was to despise the blessing, and this naturally cut of the despiser from all the enjoyment of it.

Having ascertained the scripture-idea of the word *covenant*, I shall in my next examine more particularly your idea of the Abrahamic covenant. I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

YOU have said that the Abrahamic covenant consists of two covenants—the *old* and *new*. What these two covenants are, Paul tells us clearly in the 8th of the Hebrews: but where he calls these Abraham's covenants, or covenants made with Abraham, is not so clear. Neither of these covenants were made in Abraham's time. By the old covenant he evidently means the law given by Moses, chiefly the Levitical law, the law of a carnal commandment, having ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary,—all serving unto the exemplar and shadow of heavenly things. 'This covenant was established upon earthly promises, and so decayed and waxed old. But the apostle tells us at the same time, that God made this covenant with the fathers of the Jews in the day when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Heb. viii. 9. And this was 430 years after the covenant had been confirmed of God in Christ to Abraham,

raham, Gal. iii. 17. Consequently near 400 years after Abraham's death. It seems very odd then to call a system Abraham's covenant, which had no existence till so long a time after his death.

With respect to the new covenant, it is also obvious that it is not said to be made till the other "waxed old and was ready to vanish away." Under the law God indeed promised that he would make it in the last days, or "after those days," the days of the first covenant, Heb. viii, 10. But according to Paul's reasoning it was not made till Christ came in the flesh, who is its mediator, priest and sacrifice. Consequently this covenant was not made till 1800 years after Abraham was gathered to his people.

Let us then see what the Abrahamic covenant really was, and what relation the old and new covenants had to it.

To understand this, we must ever keep in mind what is called God's covenant or Berith. The matter of it is a blessing, proposed to extend to the earth and to the life of man; which blessing in all its parts was lodged in the seed, Christ Jesus, and so laid up in him that it cannot

not be conveyed to any but through him. This seed was destined to run through the veins of many generations in a direct line from Adam to the Virgin Mary, in whom he was made of the seed of Abraham and so appeared in flesh, fraught with all the blessings of heaven. In whomsoever, then, the seed was for the time then present, there was the blessing; so that it could be said of that person, thou "shalt be a blessing." Now as God had purposed to convey this blessing through the death of his son, the seed, he made the coming of his son and the blessing in him, the subject of a promise: which promise was sometimes confirmed by God with an oath, often by a sacrifice, and always contained the rule or measure of the divine conduct towards men, and also the rule or measure of their conduct towards God. Thus in its simple form it is a *promise* strictly so called; when sworn it became an *oath*; when confirmed by a sacrifice it is a *covenant*; or rather testament and as containing rules of conduct it is called a *law*. God's covenant, then, in its perfect form means—His free grant, promise, or deed of conveyance of a blessing to any, confirmed by his oath, ratified by a sacrifice,

fice, and having a rule or law annexed to it, or established upon it, which rule is at once the measure of conduct to the granter and to such as receive the grant.

In the grant given to Abraham, we have a plain instance of each of the above forms. The blessing was first given him in the form of promise. Gen. xii. 2, 3. The same promise was confirmed by oath; Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, that in blessing I will bless thee," &c. It was ratified by sacrifice, Gen. xv. 8—17, and then it is called a covenant or Berith. v. 18. "In that same day Jehovah cut a Berith with Abraham." In Gen. xvii. we find the grant extended in full form; and then it contains the law or commandment of circumcision, v. ix, x, xi. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised."—We find this grant receiving all these epithets also in Ps. cv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 42.—We may add, Paul calls it a testament (diatheke.) Gal. iii. 17. As it conveyed an inheritance, and that through the death of the testator.

We have traced the progress of this promise or grant of God from its rise in Eden to the time of Abraham. We have seen it expand itself into a twofold blessing—the one respecting the earth and the life that now is—the other respecting the life and world to come. It has sent off a variety of side-branches in its course, not only to fertilize the ground, that she may produce food for the support of man and beast, while the earth remains, but also to support the hearts of the sinner with the hope of atonement, and consequently of pardon and life. So justly is it called a pure river of water of life, issuing from the throne of God.—The main stream of this river, howbeit, is now destined to bless the family of Abraham, through whose race it was proposed to run for many coming ages, until the glorious period should come, when all nations should be made equal sharers of its benign influences.

Accordingly, in examining the grant given to Abraham, we find it containing both earthly, and spiritual blessings. In the dispositive clause, we have first a right granted to the land of Canaan—“Unto thy seed will I give this land;” secondly, a seed promised, and the universal bless-

ging to all nations in him, to whom the inheritance of Canaan is disposed—"Sarah shall bear a son—In Isaac shall thy seed be called—In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—A visible symbol of the truth of each of these promises was also given to Abraham; a sacrifice of God. Appointment confirmed his faith in the former; and the seal or sign of circumcision ratified the latter. Gen. xv. and xvii. chapters.—This grant was renewed to Isaac, then to Jacob, and finally distributed among his sons.

At last the time came for fulfilling the first part of the grant,—"Unto thy seed will I give this land." In terms of this promise, the sovereign proprietor orders the charter to be written out, or extended in form, upon stones by Moses, and gives Israel a *possession* or *infeudment* by the *symbol* of sacrifice, the instituted mode of entering on the promised inheritance. This charter, as all others, specifies the manner of holding the possession, and the *reddendo*, or duty owing by the vassal to the royal superior. In this respect it is called *the law*, as the superior prescribes the manner of holding the inheritance

ritance disposed, and the duty, or all the acts of gratitude, by which the vassal must express his dependance upon his lord.—By having the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on them, Israel entered on the possession of the inheritance, or had their right fully constituted, and consequently became bound to hold the possession by the tenure, and to perform the sacrifices, prescribed in the charter.

This grant is called by Paul the Old Testament or disposition, and was evidently intended to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, by putting his seed in possession of the promised inheritance. Yet this deed was not the Abrahamic covenant; as Paul assures us “God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise, and “that the promise that he should be heir of the world was not through the law.” The law was only added to the promise or disposition confirmed by God unto Christ in the time of Abraham. This free grant was the original tenure by which the seed was to hold the land, and this deed, promulged by royal authority, could not be reversed by a law given 430 years after. Thus the law, or covenant at Sinai, might wax old and vanish away, while

the promise on which it was founded still remained firm. ~~x~~ Firm and sure it must be; for it was given to Christ at first, nor can it possibly be separated from him, for “the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.” Such as are Christ’s have a right to the inheritance disposed to Abraham’s seed, totally independent of the law: a right confirmed 430 years before the law was given. They that are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, and heirs, not according to the law, but “according to the promise.”

This leads me to observe, that the land of Canaan, promised to the seed of Abraham, was meant to be a figure of the heavenly inheritance, and a kind of earnest of it. Not only so; but it had been certainly revealed to Abraham himself in that light; otherwise how could he have sought after another country, even the heavenly, in consequence of the promise of the land of Canaan given to him? In Heb. xi. 9—16. the apostle tells us, that Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; and that they sought “a better country,

"country, even an heavenly." Now how could they seek a better country, if God had not promised it to them? And since we read of no promise of a country given them, but that of Canaan, we must necessarily conclude from hence, that God had opened to their minds a more extensive view of that promise as including the heavenly country:

Thus the promised inheritance was lodged in Christ Jesus—the right to it was given to him, and still remains with him. Even the figurative Canaan, the earnest of the heavenly, could not be held but by faith in him. Even the law itself was not disjoined from, but "added to the promise;" so as to subvert its purposes. The carnal ordinances it contained were all shadows of good things to come—the whole system was divinely appointed to be a school-master to lead men to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.—The Old Testament, then, was never separated from the New, but was established upon it, and subservient to it.

With respect to the new covenant or testament—As Paul calls the law of Moses, written on stones, the old testament; so he plainly calls

the law of Christ, the spirit or end of the law
of Moses, written in the heart, and founded
on better promises, even the knowledge of
God, pardon of all iniquity and an eternal in-
heritance,—the New Testament. Heb. viii. 10,
 11, 12. The grant, or *dispositive* part of this
charter, was made in the time of Abraham
and lodged with him and his seed, in these
words, “In thy seed shall all the nations of
“the earth be blessed.” But it was not ex-
tended in full form, nor its full import reveal-
ed, till the promised seed came. Then the
 right was written at large, and confirmed by
 the blood of the sacrifice, offered by the medi-
 ating priest; while the nations receive the sym-
 bol of *justification* and *infeetment* by the sprinkling of
 the sacrificial blood upon them in baptism.—
 “Be baptized for the remission of your sins,”
 that is, as a symbol of your entering on the
 possession of the privileges disposed in the New
 Testament, even the forgiveness of sins and in-
 heritance among them that are sanctified.—
 This grant when given in the simple form
 of a promise to Abraham, is called a covenant
 or testament; but it is only called the *New*
 Testament when fully extended and ratified by
 sacrifice.

I should now consider whether the promise on which the old covenant stood be done away with that covenant; as also, whether, as you aver, the churches of the Old and New Testaments were really established upon different covenants. But before a proper answer can be given to these questions, it is necessary to examine your ideas concerning the two seeds to whom the promises and covenants were made.

I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R V.

IN your 7th letter to Mr Glas (p. 65. 66.) you assert "that the old covenant was carnal and
 "earthly, in its *subjects*, or people covenanted,
 "they being the fleshly seed of Abraham,
 "children of the temporal promise, related to
 "God as his typical people, and to Christ as
 "his

“ his kinsmen according to the flesh : which
 “ typical and fleshly relation availed them much
 “ for the enjoyment of the typical and earthly pri-
 “ vileges of this covenant : but as Hagar the bond-
 “ woman was cast out with her son born after the
 “ flesh ; so the covenant itself being antiquated, its
 “ temporal typical privileges vanished, its subjects
 “ were cast out and disinherited,” &c. Whereas
 “ the new covenant is spiritual and heavenly—
 “ in its *subjects*, they being the spiritual seed of
 “ Abraham, typified by the fleshly seed ; being
 “ chosen in Christ before the foundation of the
 “ world, predestinated to the adoption of chil-
 “ dren and redeemed by the blood of Christ—
 “ By their faith they appear to be the seed of
 “ Abraham, children of the free woman and
 “ heirs according to the promise,” &c.

By this account, the two promises and co-
 venants were totally distinct from, and opposed
 to one another, in their subjects, even the two
 seeds of Abraham, the one fleshly and typical,
 the other spiritual, and born from above ; the
 former known by the flesh, the latter by their
 faith.—Let us see whether or not this account
 accords with the Standard of Truth.

The

The foundation of the distinction between the seeds of Abraham, is laid in the story of Ishmael and Isaac. These differed in their birth: the one was born after the flesh, the other by promise.—Ishmael was an unbeliever, a persecutor of the child of promise, or a despiser of Christ; Isaac was a believer, a child of faith, the offspring not of the flesh so properly, as of faith in the promise.—Ishmael was not called a child of God, nor counted as the seed of Abraham, whereas in Isaac was his seed called.—The Son of the bond-woman had no right to any of the promises made to Abraham; but Isaac was heir of both promises. Only the children of the promise could have a right to inherit the promise. So says Paul “who are Israelites to whom pertain the covenants—and the promises.” Rom. ix. 4.

These two seeds were visible in Isaac's own family: Esau was a mere child of the flesh; Jacob had the promises. In after-periods this distinction always existed in Israel, although it was not always visible. Unbelieving, profane persons, like Esau, despising the promised seed were always among the Israelites, and very frequently discovered themselves openly. Unbelief.

belief, that root of bitterness, springing up, troubled the church of Israel. It continued to be so when the promised Seed came. The unbelieving Jews, who rejected and persecuted the Messiah are expressly said to be the seed of the bond-woman, like Ishmael, as all, who had faith in the promise as fulfilled in Christ, are called children of the free-woman, Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Gal. iv. 21—31.

Even in the New Testament state of the church, Paul forewarns us this would be the case. Many unbelievers mingled with the real saints in the apostolic churches. Hence the advice—“Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God—Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.”

From the above description of the two seeds of Abraham the following truths are evident, 1st. That by Abraham's fleshly seed the scripture means such as are sprung of his flesh only, while they are unbelievers in heart, and despisers of the promised blessings; 2dly, That all who have Abraham's faith in them are
counted

counted his true spiritual seed, and that this has been always the case since the birth of Isaac; 3dly, That the offering of Abraham's body, may be counted for the seed, provided they had his faith; although not their connection with his flesh, but with his faith, gave them a title to this epithet; 4thly, That none of the promises were given or made to the unbelieving carnal seed of Abraham: only they that were of faith were blessed with faithful Abraham. Ishmael received none of the promises nor had any title to the promised blessings. The same may be said of Esau, and of all the unbelieving Israelites. Such as believed not the promise, but despised the promised land, "could not enter in because of unbelief." An unbeliever among Israel had no more title to enter the promised land, or continue in it when there, than a Moabite had; 5thly, That the fleshly, i. e. the unbelieving seed of Abraham never were, nor could be typical of the spiritual seed. Ishmael never was considered as a type of Isaac, nor Esau of Jacob, nor the carnal Israelites of the spiritual. On the contrary, the one is always contrasted with the other; and the carnal seed set up as a beacon to

warn professors of the faith of their danger, lest they should fall by the same example of unbelief.

In this glass, Sir, you may plainly see the dissimilarity between your description of the two seeds of Abraham and that which the scriptures exhibit. I am much mistaken if a single feature in the picture you have drawn will correspond with the original.—Let us examine them and see.

1st. You suppose that the whole Israelitish nation, the descendents of Jacob, are called the fleshly seed as opposed to the children of the promise. The old covenant established in the temporal promise was made with all the people of Israel; and you say that it was made with the fleshly seed of Abraham and not with the spiritual. This certainly supposes that the whole nation are called the children of the flesh, or at least, if any of the spiritual seed were under that covenant, they were under it only according to the flesh. This is directly opposite to the New Testament ideas of this matter. Paul tells us that in the Jewish nation “they were not all Israel, who were of Israel.” By Israel he means believers in the promise; by these

these, who were only of Israel, the children of the flesh only, as is clear from what he adds.

“ They who are the children of the flesh; “ these are not the children of God: but the “ children of the promise are counted for the “ seed.” Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8. How absurd, then, is it to call that nation the carnal fleshly seed of Abraham, when it consisted of both. The unbelievers among Israel were called the children of the flesh, as believers were called children of the promise. Nor is it less absurd to say,

2ndly. That the fleshly seed were typical of the spiritual. Was Ishmael a type of Isaac? or Isaac of Jacob? or the unbelieving Israelites of the believing?—Or, on the other hand, was the spiritual seed a figure of itself?—The scriptures nowhere say so: and indeed, to answer either of these questions in the affirmative would be equally unscriptural and irrational.

That the dispensation the Jews were under was figurative is evident—That the tabernacle and all its ordinances of divine service were typical, or served to the exemplar and shadow of heavenly things is no less clear—and that all the acts of God towards that people in separating them

from the nations, and taking them into a peculiar relation to himself, through his Berith, was all a figure of what he would do in a future period is abundantly manifest. But that as children of the flesh they were types of the children of promise is manifestly false. Such as believed in God and obeyed him were patterns to believers in future ages. These, who walked in the steps of Abraham's faith, were the children of Abraham. So it was then; and so it is still: for he is the father of them that believe in all dispensations. But the conduct and actions of his fleshly seed, as opposed to the believing, was so far from being a type of the temper and conduct of the children of faith, that it is set forth as a beacon or caveat, that all professors of his faith may avoid it. "All these things happened unto them for types: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 2. Cor. x, 11. *Stephen* informs us of whom the unbelieving carnal seed under the law were types—"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts, vii. 51. But

3dly. You aver, that a fleshly relation to Abraham

Abraham and to Christ as his kinsmen according to the flesh “availed the Jews much for the enjoyment of the typical and earthly privileges of this covenant.” The enjoyment of Canaan is certainly the privilege you here intend, as this is the subject of the promise: but that a fleshly relation to any person entitled one to that enjoyment, I cannot find in scripture. Why did such multitudes of Israel fall in the Wilderness? Was it because they had no fleshly relation to Abraham or does not Paul assure us that “they could not enter in because of unbelief:” not because they wanted the flesh but the faith of Abraham. Again, why do not the Jewish nation still enjoy Canaan? Or why were they cast out of it, when it was given to them “for an everlasting possession?” Are they not still the children of the flesh? Paul gives the answer—“Because of unbelief they were broken off.” Röm. xi, 20. As soon as any man denied the faith of Abraham, he forfeited every claim to Canaan and its privileges: no fleshly birth could avail him any thing. This is so evident, that you are forced to recant the above assertion in your defence of believer baptism, where (p. 78) you allow that “the fleshly birth did not entitle to the temporal privileges of the

“ earthly kingdom. Old Israel obtained the
 “ earthly inheritance by the covenant made
 “ with their father Abraham, Gen. xv, 8. ab-
 “ stract from this they had no claim to it upon
 “ the footing of their birth or righteousness
 “ more than any other people.” So far you
 say right yet still you err in the main point, i-
 magining that on account of the faith of their
 father and of the promise made to him, the
 children had a right to the inheritance, whe-
 ther they held the faith of their father or not.
Here you err not knowing the scriptures, which
inform Israel, that although Jehovah loved
their fathers and thus chose their feed after
them to inherit Canaan, yet he had chosen
them to be a holy people, to fear the Lord
their God, to walk in his ways and to love him,
and to serve him with all their heart. “ Cir-
 “ cumcise therefore the foreskin of your
 “ heart and be no more stiff-necked. But
 “ if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt
 “ not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and wor-
 “ ship other Gods and serve them; I denounce
 “ unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish;
 “ ye shall not prolong your days upon the land
 “ whither thou passest over Jordan, to go to
 “ possess

"possess it." No fleshly connection availed the disobedient Israelite; nor did it avail him that his father had believed, while he himself did not walk in the steps of his faith.

4thly. You assert, that the old covenant had not the spiritual, but the carnal or unbelieving Israel for its subjects*. A gross mistake indeed! The very contrary is the truth. The scriptures inform us that both covenants were given to the very same people even the Jews—"To whom belonged the covenants and the promises." Rom. ix. 4. The same apostle tells us, that the New covenant has the same subjects with the Old. Heb. viii, 8. 9, 10. "The days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the *house of Israel* and with the *house of Judah*: not according to the covenant, that I made with their *fathers*." Thus both covenants were made with the same people, the one with the fathers, the other with the children: accordingly, the very same identical people, even the native Jews, who received the first testament at Sinai, received also the new. The first New Testament church consisted of the very same

* See the quotation in the beginning of this letter.

people who had been members of the Old Testament church. Hence Peter addressing the old covenant subjects, tells them that they are also subjects of the new—"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."—Thus both covenants and promises were primarily given to the same people: nor is there the remotest hint given either in the texts quoted or any where else in the sacred records, that they were given to *different seeds*.

That the spiritual or believing seed were subjects of the Sinai covenant and promise will appear farther evident from what Paul says in Gal. iv, 1. 2. &c. "Now I say, that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of this world." That by the heir Paul means the spiritual seed is clear from the foregoing verse (c, iii. 29.) "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

But to understand this point fully, it is necessary to observe what Paul says concerning the seed to whom the promises were made. Gal. iii. 16. "To Abraham and his seed were
the promises made. He saith not, and to
seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy
seed, which is Christ." From this text it is
evident, that all the promises were made, or
the blessings disposed to one seed even Christ:
and that not only the promise of all spiritual
blessings is here intended, but also the promise
of the inheritance of Canaan in its full extent,
the following verse leaves us no ground to
doubt—"For if the inheritance be of the law,
it is no more of promise: but God gave it
to Abraham by promise." The promise, then
in both its parts, earthly and spiritual, was
made to Christ at first hand. The father dis-
posed to him the kingdom; and consequently
no man could have any title to any part of the
blessing but through Christ, to whom the pro-
mises were all made, and who alone has the
power of disposing of them, to whom and in
what measure he sees proper. Now the scrip-
ture assures us that such as are Christ's can a-
lone

lone have a right to the privileges given to A-
braham and his seed—"If ye be Christ's then,
"are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according
"to the promise." Nor is it less certain, that
none are Christ's but these, to whom it is gi-
ven to believe—Ye are all the children of God
"by faith in Christ Jesus;" and "they which
"be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."
 No connection with Abraham's flesh, then, en-
 titled to any blessing given to that patriarch.

Even the kingdom of Canaan belonged to
Christ. This he disposed to Israel, to all such
of the descendants of Jacob as professed to be-
lieve and obey him. To all such he gave in-
testment and sashine of the inheritance, in the
most solemn form; but at the same time, the
preamble and whole tenor of that deed of con-
veyance shews them that they could only re-
tain or hold the possession by such a faith in
him as works by love. "Diligently hearken
"to the voice of Jehovah thy God—Love Je-
"hovah thy God with all thine heart—believe
"and thou shalt be established." This is the
doctrine of the law: this the doctrine of the
gospel. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye
"would do the works of Abraham:" ye would
 believe

believe and obey. Every unbeliever, in the household of Abraham, is like Ishmael: to him none of the promises belong; being the slave of sin, he "abideth not in the house for ever," but shall be cast out.

Thus I think it evident to a demonstration that both promises or covenants were given to the same seed, and that none had a claim to them but in the right of Christ, or by faith in his name; and consequently all that you have said concerning the two seeds to whom the promises were made is one continued series of blundering.

It is surprizing that your own reasonings did not lead you to the truth. Speaking of the promise of Christ and spiritual blessings, you say*. "It appears that the promises, made unto the Jewish *fathers*, had a primary respect unto their children; yet not unto all their natural children *as such*, for then that whole nation behoved to be saved; but only unto a remnant of them according to the election of grace." Now from the same promises will it not also conclude, that the temporal promise was not made to all the natural children

of

* Defence of believer-baptism. p. 11.

of Jacob *as such*; for then that whole nation must have enjoyed Canaan, as all were equally related to the flesh of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Whereas their history informs us, that all above 20 years of age at the Exodus from Egypt, save Caleb and Joshua, fell in the Wilderness, and "could not enter in because of "unbelief." This promise, then, only respected the believing seed of Israel, for if it respected the natural seed as such, then the promise of God bath failed, and his word "hath taken no effect." The word preached only profited, when "it was incorporated by faith with them that heard it."

But you will say, were there not many unbelievers in heart to be found in possession of the land of Canaan and its privileges? To this I answer, many of that description were taken into the covenant at Sinai, and many such afterwards appeared in Canaan, in succeeding ages. But they were admitted at first, and continued afterwards in the possession, only on the profession of faith and obedience. So soon as they rejected the faith, and forsook the God of their fathers, they were either destroyed immediately, or threatened with destruction.

struction. They were not all Israel, who were of Israel. This is precisely the state of things also in the New Testament church; yet, I hope you will not say, for this reason, the promises of that Testament are made to hypocrites and unbelievers.

In my next, I propose to shew the connection between these two covenants and wherein they differed the one from the other. In the mean time, I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

S I R,

MANKIND are saved by hope in all ages, and this hope has been always founded on a divine promise. This promise was given to man, on the entrance of sin into the world, the

the promise of the seed, containing all the blessings which men can need, or God has proposed to bestow to the ages of ages. This is the everlasting covenant, on which all the divine dispensations are founded, and to subserve the purposes of which all contribute. It was promulged to Abraham in the form of a royal edict, more unalterable than the laws of the Medes and Persians, and no sinner, none of the race of Adam, could entertain any rational hope of salvation from sin and death, or of the enjoyment of eternal life, but through faith in this promise. Since, then, this promise is confirmed by the oath of God, and has been and is still the established constitution of heaven, we may be sure that God has never revealed or appointed any law, covenant or deed of conveyance of any kind, either unconnected with it or opposite to it.

In what light, then, must we view the law of Moses? Did it point out another plan of salvation than through faith in the promise; or “Is the law against the promise of God?” God forbid; says Paul. Had there been a law given, intending to convey eternal life, righteousness must have been by that law. The law
of

of Moses was not given for that purpose, and so was no rival of the promise.—Nor was the law unconnected with the promise : it was made to be subservient to it. It was a school-master to bring men to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. So far from proposing any other plan of salvation, it shut men up unto the faith which was afterwards to be revealed.

The law of Moses seems to have been appointed for several purposes, suited to the two promises given to Abraham, and established with Israel. 1st, It was intended to give possession and inheritance of the land of Canaan to the sons of Jacob, by the symbols of sacrifice and sprinkling of blood. This possession was given in consequence of the disposition or charter given to Abraham, one clause of which said—"Un-
"to thy seed will I give this land." By a symbol of this same kind Abraham had been entered heir to the same promise. Gen. xv. 2ndly, The law, strictly so called, was an instrument of theocracy or divine government among Israel as a nation, proposing maxims and rules of conduct to that people, calculated to promote national happiness, and sanctioned by temporal rewards and punishments. This

intention of the law is so obvious that it needs no illustration. 3dly, It was intended to subserve the grand promise of the seed with all spiritual blessings in him. X This it did by enjoining circumcision, the token of the covenant of the seed as about to come of their flesh; by commanding them to believe in him when he should come—"him shall ye hear in all "things," while that part of it called the Levitical law, with its whole system of ordinances, was intended to prefigure that seed with all his spiritual blessings,—to keep alive the knowledge of the plan of the remission of sins through faith in the blood of atonement,—to convey to them an earnest of the spiritual blessings in the promise, by admitting them to a delightful fellowship with God in the sanctuary, the figure of Christ—and, in short, by shutting them out from all hope of justification in any other way but by faith in atoning blood.—

So properly does Paul say, the law is not against, but added to the promise; and to get a full view of this important subject it will be necessary to attend to that apostle's illustrations of it.

In the end of the third and through the whole of the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians he sets this matter in a strong and full point of view. 1st, "It was added because of transgressions." As neither penitence, nor prayers, nor pious resolutions; nor good deeds of any kind could procure pardon for a sinner by the law, unless he brought the sacrifice for his sin, and had it offered by the priest according to the law, this method of acceptance with God was obviously intended to prevent men from transgressing, or going out of the way established by the promise.

The law contained precepts so numerous, and so impossible to be observed even for a single day, that it made every man a sinner; and as no sinner could draw nigh to God but through a priest and a sacrifice, this effectually excluded all dependance on works of righteousness the sinner could do to conciliate his maker's regards, and "shut him up to the faith," or to live by faith in that sacrifice, which was forever to perfect the sanctified. Thus he had daily set before his eyes the truth of Habakkuk's maxim—"He, who is righteous by faith shall live."

2ndly, Paul views the law as a school-master, including the idea of a teacher and a governor, instructing the children of God's family in the elements of divine knowledge, and keeping them in fervile awe and dread by temporal penalties, until the time appointed of the father. Such was the office assigned the law of Moses in the house of God; and is it possible, then, that the law could be intended to teach the children disobedience to their parent? Yet this the law must have done, if it taught them to attempt to live in opposition to the plan established and published in an irreversible decree by the Lord of the family, 430 years before this same pedagogue had any office assigned him in the household.—The ordinances and institutions of the law were the alphabet of Christianity or the rudiments of the gospel: and it was the office of the law to teach the children the *power* of these elementary characters, and to form them in such combinations, as when properly arranged, like words forming a sentence, should point out some truth of the gospel; some part of the character or office of Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness. As the scholars, however, were generally

generally dull of hearing, and the characters themselves, being of the hieroglyphic kind, numerous and difficult to be understood, the progress in learning them was slow at all times. At last, the key to open these characters being lost, the vanity of imagination put a sense on them, far more favourable to the pride of the human heart, a sense by which the law was truly against the promise.— It taught them to say, that the governor of the universe put off the character of creator and, in condescension to the favoured nation of Israel, assumed the form of a moral governor, proposing to give his creatures eternal life on condition of their performing obedience to a certain set of external rules propounded in the law. Thus men were led to rest on the morphosis, the mere form and letter of the law, in opposition to the true spirit or sense of it. This is the idea which enflamed the opposition to Messiah when he came; this is the source of all opposition to the gospel still. Misled by this false commentary, you and many moderns of no mean name, have interpreted the law as opposed to the gospel. According to you, the law was a mere covenant of peculiarities, made with the

carnal seed of Jacob, proposing national happiness as the reward of external obedience. Others view it as a covenant of works, annexing eternal life to perfect obedience to what they call the moral law; and thus directly oppose the law to the promise, averring that there was a law given that could have given life—A commentary not unworthy of that great genius, the first commentator on scripture, whose comment we have recorded in the third chapter of Genesis. In this sense Paul, indeed, sometimes speaks of the law, contrasting the righteousness of the law with that of the gospel: but it is only when addressing Jews, who understood the law in this sense, or cautioning christians against any reliance on the law in the Jewish sense of it, as in that view it directly opposed the gospel. It is evident, howbeit, when he gives his own view of it, he shews that the gospel was the spirit of the law, and that it is impossible to obey the law without believing in him who is the end of the law for righteousness, since this is the express command of the law—“Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.” But

3dly, The connection and difference between these two covenants will be best understood by attending to the allegory recorded. Gal. iv. 21—31. There the family of Abraham is considered as a symbol of the family of God from the time of the giving of the law at Sinai to the end of the world; or of the state of the church under both testaments—An allegory strangely misunderstood by you and many other writers on this subject. Hagar, indeed, stands in the allegory in the place of the Sinaitic covenant; as Sarah represents the Zion or
 X new covenant, but it has not been attended to that Hagar in the allegory does not represent the covenant or law given at Sinai as designed or intended by God, but the law as explained by the unbelieving Jews in Paul's time. As these Jews opposed the gospel they interpreted their law so as to oppose the gospel also. Thus Paul does not say, that Hagar and Sinai answer to the Jerusalem which was before Christ came; for then she must have filled Sarah's place as well as her own, as Sarah was in that Jerusalem as well as Hagar, the promise as well as the law;—but he says, Hagar answers to the Jerusalem, or church of the unbelieving Jews,

which

which *now is*, and is in bondage with her children. The necessary consequence of this is—Ishmael was not a figure of, or does not answer to, the seed to whom the covenant at Sinai was given, or to Israel under the law before Christ, otherwise he fills Isaac's place also, since the heir of the promise was likewise under the law during that period, Gal. iv. 1—4. Ishmael, then, in this allegory only represents the unbelieving seed of Abraham, children of that Jerusalem which, in the time of Paul, persecuted the free-woman and her seed. So mistaken is your idea, that Hagar and her son represented the old covenant and its subjects, all of whom, you say, were cast out at the commencement of the new covenant.

To understand this allegory properly, it must be observed, that Sarah was the true wife and mistress of Abraham's family long before Hagar had a place in it: and even when Hagar was admitted to it, she was introduced in the character of an handmaid, not to oppose but to serve Sarah. It was Sarah that gave her to Abram to be his wife; and hence her son was considered as the son of Sarah and not so properly of Hagar. “Go in unto my maid,” says Sarah

Sarah, "it may be I may obtain children by her." Gen. vi. 2. When Isaac was born, Ishmael was still considered as a child of the family. Hagar was still the servant of Sarah and entirely in her power: both lived in one house, as did their two sons also. Isaac and Ishmael were considered as sons of the same family: both had the sign of the same covenant in their flesh, and both lived peaceably in the same household as brethren, until the time of the weaning of Isaac, that is as commentators seem to allow, when Isaac was about five years of age.

Such was the first state of Abraham's family—a fine picture of the state of the family of Israel from the time of the giving the law at Sinai until the coming of Messiah. The promise had been in that family long before the law, and was the true mother and mistress of the household. At last the law was added, not as a rival to oppose her, but a servant to obey her. The children born under the law were all considered as the children of God, and heirs of the promise. All had the same sign of the covenant in their flesh, the seal of the righteousness of the faith; nor was there
any

any external badge of distinction among them. All professed the same faith, worshipped at the same place and according to the same ritual. During that state of minority, all were equally subjected to the severe discipline of the law, inspiring a spirit of bondage to fear, while they learned the elements of this world under the lash of the angry pedagogue. "The heir, while a child, is no better than a slave; tho' he be lord of all." Some, indeed, served God only from servile custom or a spirit of fear; others from faith in the promise. These were born by promises; those of the flesh. But their birth was secret, not published as yet to the world. Each too, had his own nourishment: the one imbibed the spirit of servility; the other sucked the breasts of the consolations of the promise. This, however, was invisible, they both eat the same visible bread, and drank the same visible cup. Both lived together as brethren of the same family, and in the same house, until the time appointed of the father for emancipating the heir of the promise from the discipline of the pedagogue and weaning him from the breasts of a ceremonious ritual.

Sometimes

Sometimes before this, the seed of the bond-woman had interpreted the law as a covenant of works, promising righteousness and eternal life to all her sons on account of their fleshly connection with Abraham, and on condition of their performing the mere external works or deeds of the law, without regard to the end and spirit of it. If they served God "in the oldness of the letter," they laid in their claim to life eternal, and the possession of the promised inheritance. Thus Hagar had become a rival to Sarah; the mistress instead of the servant; the law was truly against the promise of God. Thus the bond-woman and her seed persecuted the free-woman and her seed with "cruel mockings." This produced a change in the family. The bond-woman and her son, having forsaken their station in the household and become open enemies instead of friends, Sarah in the figure had said "cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." This was spoken as a prophecy of what would happen in an after-period of the Abrahamic family.

This

This is the Hagar of whom Paul speaks: this the Jerusalem, which then was, and was, as she still is, in bondage with her children.

While the covenant of Sinai, or the law, kept its station assigned it in the house of God, it was no disgrace to be under it; more than it is shameful for the child of a nobleman to be in the nursery, under the tutorage of an handmaid.

In this view, the law was spiritual, holy, just and good; coinciding with and subserving the designs of the promise.

In this light the sons of the free woman still remember her kind offices with gratitude, and recollect the instructions of their ancient nurse and tutor with profit, as enforcing the precepts and throwing a lustre around the maxims of their parent.

But as soon the law set up as a rival to the promise, pretending to be the true mother of the family, and claiming the inheritance in her own right, independent of, and exclusive of the promise, she was not only useless but hurtful in the family, and was ejected accordingly with all her sons.

It is now clear, that Paul does not oppose the Jerusalem of old, or the church as constituted at Sinai, to the Jerusalem from above,

or

or the church under the New Testament. He only contrasts the law as explained by the unbelieving Jews in his time, and the Jerusalem or church constituted on it in that view, with the promise and church or children adhering to the promise as the mother of them all.—

The law, indeed, was always *distinct* from the promise, as the hand-maid from the mistress, and so could be put away at the pleasure of the head of the family. X

Hence the fault of the true sons or believers of the promise in the days of Paul, who would be still under the tutelage of the dry-nurse, even after their father had dismissed her from his service—would be under the discipline of the pedagogue, when the father had declared them to be of age.

This was highly undutiful. But the conduct of the unbelieving Jews amounted to direct rebellion.

They avowed the law as their true mother, and despised the promise, persecuting her seed and refusing to hold the inheritance but solely in the right of the law.

The original right came by promise; but they would not submit to the righteousness of God, and hence they have not attained to righteousness, but have fallen from grace, as every one must, who claims the inheritance in right of law.

I may add, that when Ishmael was ejected from Abraham's house, he had a place of refuge provided for him by God, and a promise that he should dwell there in the presence of all his brethren, and even increase so as to become a great nation; and that because he was Abraham's seed according to the flesh. Gen. xxi.

13.—The unbelieving Jews have been treated in the same manner. They are beloved for the “father's sake;” and although cast out of his house and inheritance, yet God has assured them of an asylum in all places whither he has scattered them; where they shall increase and multiply, dwelling in the presence of all their brethren, so that it shall not be in the power of all the nations, combined together, to extirpate them. “I will not make a full end of thee.” How punctually has this promise been accomplished! This has certainly come forth from the Lord of hosts. I am,

S I R,

Yours &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

S I R,

I HOPE you will now see what answer must be given to the question proposed in the end of my 4th Letter, viz. whether, as you aver, the churches of the old and new testaments were really established upon different covenants. The promise of the seed with the universal blessing in him was the real foundation of both churches. Faith in the promise as about to be accomplished was the mother of the children of God from the beginning untill Christ came. . “The hope of the promise
“made of God unto our fathers;” says Paul,
“unto which, our twelve tribes instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come.” Acts, xxvi. 6, 7. Peter, too, addressing the Jews, says—“Ye are the children of the covenant, which God made with our fathers,
“saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall

"all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Acts. iii. 25. This he says to the Jews who had not yet believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the seed of the promise, and so were still under the Old Testament, hoping for the promise.

The church, then, under both testaments were founded on the same promise—

the Old Testament church on the promise as about to be accomplished; the New Testament

church on the promise as already fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

The law or old covenant served in the former as a tutor, hand-maid or nurse, like Hagar in the family of Abraham,

but was not the mother of the family, and hence has been discarded from her station, the

time of her service being ended. Since the Faith is come, we are no more under a tutor or

school-master. This, howbeit, has made no material alteration in the family: Sarah and I-

saac are the constitutional parts of it, and remain so; when Hagar and her son are ejected.

Had the church of old been established upon the old covenant or the law of Moses, then

Paul's reasoning (Rom. xi. 16—25) is not only inconclusive but absurd. He considers Gentile-

believers as branches of a wild olive, grafted
among

among the Jewish-believers, the branches of the true olive, partaking with them "of the root and fatness of the olive." The unbelieving Jews, though natural branches, had been broken off, to make room for the ingraftment of the believing Gentiles, these branches of the wild olive. Here, then, is a stock from which believers in Christ among the Jews were not broken off, and into which the chosen from among the Gentiles were ingrafted. This cannot be the old covenant, as that waxed old and was ready to vanish away in Paul's time, so that neither Jew nor Greek had any thing farther to do with it. It is a stock in which all the branches "stand by faith." What then can it be but the promise of the seed and the blessing in him, with which no man can have any connection without believing it? Of this promise the Jews were the children: for its sake they were all born and enjoyed all the privileges they had been so liberally blessed with. By faith in the same promise we Gentiles too become sons—We "are all the children of " God by faith in Christ Jesus."

This not only shews us, that both churches were founded on the same covenant, but that

both are radically one and the same church. The believing Jews were not broken off from their old stock, but we were grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive; or of all the privileges virtually included in the promise given to Abraham. The Jews were the seminal branches of the church under the law, and of them also the first christian churches were wholly constituted. We are but adventitious scions, grafted in contrary to nature, and would do well not to be high-minded, but fear.

This leads me to correct a very common mistake on speaking on this subject. You and many others call the New Testament church the Gentile church, in opposition to that under the law; forgetting that "we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief-corner stone," all of whom were Jews. Our Saviour and salvation are of the Jews. All the apostles, who preached the gospel, and planted the first new testament churches were Jews by birth. To the Jews the gospel was first preached; and of them the first churches in Christ were constituted. Paul too has assured us, that although

because

because of unbelief many of that people are broken off, yet God is able to graff them in again. Not only so, but he will graff them in; for "these have now not believed, that through our mercy, *they also may obtain mercy.*" Yes: "How much more shall these which be the natural branches be graffed into their own olive tree"?—Is this properly a Gentile-church? "Boast not against the branches."

"But by far the greatest number of the members of the new testament churches consist of Gentiles." Very true: but were there no Gentiles in the old testament church? Abraham's family was the radical church of Israel, and was not by far the greatest part of that little society made up of strangers, i. e. Gentiles? Did not even the constitution at Sinai make one law in religious matters for Jew and Gentile? Did it not say, "as ye are, so shall all the strangers be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you?" Numb. xv. 14, 16. This ordinance too continued through all the generations of that state: in consequence of which, multitudes of Gen-
tiles

tiles became Jews in after-periods, so that the temple had a court of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Not only in the prosperous days of Solomon but even during the captivity at Babylon, "many of the people of the land became Jews." Esth. viii. 17.

Where, then, lay the difference, in this respect, betwixt the old and New Testament states of the church?—This deserves particular attention.—The Gentiles, we have seen, were admitted to both; but not on the same footing. The civil polity or law of the state did not admit Gentiles to become naturalized subjects of the Jewish commonwealth. Canaan, by the law, was divided among the tribes of Israel according to their families, and whatever portion of the land was assigned by lot to a family, it was hereditary in that family, so that it could not be alienated, even to a brother-Jew, but for a time; much less could it become the property of a stranger for ever, or even for a single day. Gentiles, then, could only be admitted among Israel in the character of strangers and sojourners, incapable of being fellow-heirs, or of holding landed property among them. Servants they might be according to the

the

the law, or they might trade with the Jews occasionally; but brethren they could not be. So high, so strong was the wall of partition reared by the political law of that nation between Jews and Gentiles.

With respect to the ceremonial or religious law; as Gentiles were excluded by the law of the state from fulfilling any office in the department of government, so by the laws regulating the offices of religion they were equally incapacitated for officiating in any order of the priesthood. In this respect, however, they were only upon the same foot with eleven tribes of Israel, as the sacerdotal offices were the sole prerogative of the sons of Levi. But with regard to all the ordinary services of religion, as bringing sacrifices, worshipping at, and praying towards Jerusalem, there was one law and one manner appointed for the Israelite and for the stranger sojourning with him. The stranger, professing faith in the promise given to Abraham, was admitted to the church by the same rites which admitted an Israelite. In this respect the people of the heathen lands might become Jews, and worship the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem. Accordingly we read (Acts, ii.

10.) of profelytes as well as Jews assembled at Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost, who had come from very distant regions for that purpose. In the second temple, indeed, there had been a wall of partition erected between the outer court where the Jews were admitted and the court of the Gentiles, in which profelytes assembled for worship; but that this was of divine appointment is no where said in scripture.

From the above review, then, it seems evident, that the laws from Sinai, directing religious services, did not, properly speaking form a wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. They were directed to the Jew first, indeed; but they all had a secondary respect to the Gentile. The same is also true with respect to the gospel-institutions. Whatever the gospel says, it says it "to the Jew first and then "to the Greek." Rom. i. 16. ii. 10. Gentiles are blessed in Christ; but the Jews were so first. Unto them first God having raised up his son, sent him to bless them.

But the civil or state-laws of Israel made an effectual separation between Jew and Greek, as we have seen already. No heathen, or one
not

not of Abraham's seed, could be incorporated with Israel, hold landed property in Canaan, or be a fellow-heir and of the same body, having a title to the privileges of the commonwealth of Israel. A Gentile was only a stranger and foreigner in the eye of the state even when admitted to all the institutions of the church.—This wall of separation the gospel has demolished; so that Gentiles are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens, fellow-burgesses with the saints and of the household of God.

Here, then, lies the true difference between the two churches, with respect to the admission of the Gentiles. Even when brethren in the Old Testament church, they were still viewed as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise:" they had no title to the promised inheritance nor to have the seed of the promise descending from them. But now the case is totally altered. Jews and Gentiles are brethren in all respects: "fellow-heirs and of the same body, partakers of the same promise." The new covenant includes both equally; giving them both the same right to the inheritance,
and

and to all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ. The Gentiles have their part and lot with the Jews in the inheritance of the gospel; so that there is no difference.

This is what Paul calls "fellowship of the "mystery," or the mysterious fellowship. That the Gentiles should be admitted to church-membership with the Jews was no mystery at all. The law itself had enjoined this union, prescribing one law and one manner of worship to Israel and to the stranger sojourning with them. But that the Gentiles should be fellow-citizens, joint-heirs of the same inheritance with them; of the same polity or commonwealth, was a mystery indeed. The law had mentioned no such thing. It made the Gentiles aliens and strangers. The prophecies, indeed had given obscure hints of this fellowship; but the gospel alone has revealed the mystery, which was hid in God from ages and generations.

I shall now consider the other question proposed in the end of my 4th letter—" Whether " the promise, on which the old covenant " stood, be done away with that covenant." —According to your *i. e.* the vulgar opinion, both

both vanished away together, both being fulfilled and antiquated. Perhaps this is a mistake let us consult the unerring articles and see.

That the old covenant has waxed old and vanished away, is a point indisputably evident: but that the promise, on which it was founded, is fulfilled and so done away as of no more force,

is not so clear. By this promise Abraham's seed had a title to the land of Canaan—"Unto thy seed will I give this land." This promise was originally unconnected with the law, or what Paul calls the old covenant; "for the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." If then the right to the inheritance came not by the law, the abolition of the law could not destroy that right: and since Paul assures us that the right came by faith, or, what is the same thing, by promise, it would seem evident that the right stands as valid as ever, and that nothing can exclude his seed from the possession of that inheritance but their unbelief of the promise made to their father. This idea agrees exactly with the original grant—"I will give unto thee, and to thy seed—

“all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” Gen. xvii. 8. You tell us, indeed, that Canaan is called an everlasting possession, because though given to Israel for a short time only, yet the thing signified by it is eternal. This idea throws such an air of uncertainty around the scripture, that it is impossible to ascertain their true sense. If the term *everlasting*, when applied to Canaan, means only a temporary duration, how can we be assured that it has another sense, when applied to the heavenly inheritance?—The truth is, the original word, rendered *everlasting* has always the same idea annexed to it: it uniformly denotes a period including all the ages of Messiah’s kingdom—the duration of mediatory interposition, extending to the time, when Messiah shall deliver up the kingdom to the father, and God shall be all in all. This kingdom shall not end in time, or give place to another; but it shall be lost in eternity. With the duration of this kingdom, the right of the Jews to Canaan is commensurate; for “the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.” God gave Canaan to Israel; and although the actual possession of that land depends upon their

faith

faith and the obedience connected with it, yet their right stands so firm, that even in Babylon, they could still call Judea their own land.

The case is the same still. By unbelief, rejecting the Messiah, they have been long scattered like vagabonds among the nations, yet Moses assures them, that if they returned to the Lord their God, and should obey his voice, he would return and gather them from all the nations, whither he had scattered them. Not only so, but he adds, “If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord gather thee—and will bring thee to the land which thy father possessed, and thou shalt possess it.”

Deut. xxx. 1—6. Here is no time limited; but if at any time, during the existence of that people, they shall obey the voice of their God, their restoration to Canaan is certain: and that this shall happen in a yet future period is indisputably evident. Moses, in his song, (Deut. xxxii,) speaks of the state of the Jews, after the coming of Messiah and the calling of the Gentiles, for so Paul explains verses 21st and 43d in Rom. x. 19. xv. 10. There Moses foretells their scattered and wretched state, during

{the times of the Gentiles; but concludes with a prediction, that at the last God “will be “merciful to his land and to his people.”

Both Canaan and Israel, then, have still a peculiar relation to God—the one is still *his* land, and the other *his* people: and mercy is reserv-

ed for both. When and how shall this happen? Hosea answers, “Israel shall abide many “days without asking and without a sacrifice “—afterward shall the children of Israel re- “turn, and seek the Lord their God, and Da- “vid their king; and shall fear the Lord and “his goodness in the latter days.” Hof. iii.

4, 5. Zechariah also informs us that at that time Jerusalem shall “be lifted up and abide “in her place: the just shall dwell in it, and “there shall be no more curse, and no more “the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of “hosts.” Zech. xiv. 10, 11, 21. Then, says God, “I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy “in my people; and the voice of weeping shall “be no more heard in her, nor the voice “of crying.” Is. lxx. 19. This period, the time of the restitution of all things, is not yet come: but come it shall; Jehovah will hasten it in its time.

Of this period all the prophets since the beginning of the world have spoken. We may explain away the plain obvious sense of these prophecies as we will, to suit our systems, accommodating them to events which have already happened, but all in vain. While the New Testament writers (Rom. xi. 2. Pet. iii. 13. Rev. chap. 21st and 22d) assure us that this period is still future, it is vain for us to perplex ourselves in wresting the scriptures. For this period Israel are preserved a distinct people, separated from all the nations, whither they are scattered in the evil day. God has shut them up in unbelief, only that they may obtain mercy.

Their prophecies concerning the humble, suffering state of Messiah are hid from the minds of the Jews. Here lies their error: hence when Messiah came to his own, his own received him not. But all their ideas of his glorious appearance are just and accurate. We laugh at the expectations of Israel; but their hopes shall not be disappointed. They expect Messiah to appear in glory, in the clouds of heaven, that they shall see him and know him; that he will come for their salvation and to bring,

bring them to their own land, while all his enemies shall be destroyed. the prophecies justify these expectations. "They shall look upon
 "him, whom they have pierced and they shall
 "mourn," as Saul their pattern did, when he saw him. Then God "will avenge the blood
 "of his servants, and will render vengeance
 "to his adversaries, and will be merciful
 "unto his land, and to his people." When the redeemer comes to Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, then "all Israel shall
 "be saved." I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

S I R,

TREATING on the two covenants, the earthly and the spiritual, you consider the subjects

jects of the latter as having no right to the promises of the former. Earthly blessings were promised to the Jews only, in which promises New Testament believers have no interest. The promises of the old covenant, you say, were "carnal blessings in earthly places, respecting only a prosperous life in the earthly Canaan; the subjects of which were the fleshly seed of Abraham." Letters, &c. p. 64, 65. "While the promises of the new covenant are spiritual blessings in heavenly places."

This idea is very common: let us see whether it be just. We have seen the two promises, or the two great branches of the original promise, conveying earthly and spiritual blessings, both so connected together that they have never been separated, from the beginning of the world to the first appearance of Messiah.

In Jesus Christ all the promises were originally laid: and Paul tells us, that when he came, "in him all the promises are yea and amen."

The promised blessings, then, must be all in him; and hence one would be apt to conclude that believing in Christ, we are still heirs of the promised blessings, whether earthly or spiritual. Believing in Christ, Abraham had the promise

promise of being heir of the world : but it seems now this promise is long ago fully accomplished, and is no more to be looked for in Christ; although Paul assures us, that they that are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and so heirs according to the promise.

The promise that Abraham should be heir of the world seems to be much mistaken. 1st, It is imagined, that the country promised to him was only the land of Canaan, properly so called; and doubtless this land was not obviously included in the grant, when God said to him "I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan." In this respect the promise was fulfilled in the days of Joshua, when Israel got possession of Canaan. Yet this was but a small part of the inheritance intended in the grant. In Ex. xxiii. 31. God says "I will set thy bounds from the red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river;" *i. e.* thy dominions shall extend from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean on the west unto the Euphrates on the east. This promise was not accomplished until the days of Solomon, who, we are told, "reigned

“reigned over all kingdoms, from the river
 “(Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines,
 “and unto the border of Egypt.” 1 Kings,
 iv. 21.—Yet even this dominion, extensive as
 it was, is but an earnest or specimen of the
 purchased possession, or of the land conveyed
 by promise. Paul says that Abraham was
 heir of the world, and not only of a small
 country in it: and that the whole earth was
 intended by the grant, which God gave him,
 is clear from the interpretation of it given to
 his seed, Christ Jesus. When he rose from
 the dead, the sure decree was declared to him,
 or he got the sure mercies of David. A part
 of that decree, or of David’s mercies, we have
 in Ps. lxxii. 8. “He shall have dominion al-
 “so from sea to sea, and from the river unto
 “the ends of the earth.” Solomon enjoyed a
 part of this, but Jesus got the whole: as it is
 written in Ps. ii. 8. &c. “Ask of me and
 “I will give thee the heathen for thine inhe-
 “ritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth
 “for a possession.” Thus the whole earth is
 given to the seed of Abraham.

Thus the land of Canaan, strictly so called,
 was but an earnest or small specimen or sample of
 the

the inheritance given to Abraham and his seed by promise. Solomon had a far larger dominion given him; and Christ is made Lord of the whole earth.

'This is not all. Abraham explained the promise as extending farther still. He viewed it as a promise of a better country even an heavenly one. Such a country he and the other patriarchs sought, as we are expressly told, Heb. xi. 10, 15, 16. They sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, looking for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This city was not in the Canaan, which Israel inherited of old; for we are informed it was prepared for them in that country they desired, even the heavenly. v. 16.—A certain proof that the heavenly country was included in the promise. Abraham sought this country by faith; and this faith was but a belief of the promise of God. If this country, then, had not been meant in the promise, his faith could avail nothing.

2dly, This promise is explained as meant to be accomplished to his seed and not to himself in person. This seems not to tally with the terms of the grant—"I will give unto thee, and
"unto

"unto thy seed after thee, the land of Canaan."

Gen. xvii. 8. Paul too informs us that "Abraham was called to go out unto a place, *which he should after receive for an inheritance.*" Heb. xi. 8. But this land to which he went out at the call of God, he has not yet received in person for an inheritance, even an everlasting possession; consequently he must receive it in a future period, of which I shall treat in a little.

3dly, It is averred, that the earthly promise belonged only to the carnal, and not to the spiritual seed of Abraham.—That the land of Canaan was only given to the believing seed, descended from that illustrious patriarch according to the flesh, and not to the children of his faith among the Gentiles is abundantly evident. At least to the former only it was given before Christ came. But we have seen that the promise to Abraham made him heir of the whole world, when understood in its full latitude, yea it extended to heaven itself. In this view, all the seed of Abraham, all that are Christ's, whether Jew or Gentile by nature, have an equal title to the inheritance promised to their father. This is so evident from Paul's reasonings in his fourth chapter

chapter of the epistle to the Romans, that it is surprizing how men would miss his meaning. In v, xiii. We are told that "the promise" that he should be heir of the world was not "to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, "but through the righteousness of faith. For "if they which are of the law be heirs, faith "is made void, and the promise made of none "effect. Therefore, v. 16, it" *i. e.* the promise that he should be heir of the world, as no other is here mentioned, "is of faith, "that it might be by grace; to the end that "the promise might be sure to all the seed:" and lest we should dream that this inheritance belongs only to the seed of the circumcision, he adds "not to that only which is of the law, "but to that also which is of the faith of Ab- "raham, who is the father of us all." It is certain, then, that the promise of the world given to Abraham is given equally to all his believing seed. Such as were of the law had possession of a part of it, but the whole of it belongs to such as believe. As the inheritance was not of the law, the law could not divest us of our right: and the gospel or new covenant is so far from cutting off our title to the earth, that

that it illustrates and confirms our claim; assuring us that all the promises are yea and amen in Christ to all the seed.

This is the express doctrine of the prophets and of the apostles of Christ. That the meek

shall inherit the earth, when the wicked shall be cut off is foretold again and again in David's Psalms: and that the whole earth shall be given them for a possession is clearly expressed in Dan. vii. 27. "The kingdom and dominion, " and the greatness of the kingdom under the " whole heaven, shall be given to the people of " the saints of the most high, whose kingdom " is an everlasting kingdom."

This shall happen, we are told, when "the judgment shall " fit, and they shall take away his dominion," the dominion of the beast, "to consume and " to destroy it to the end." This is the beast of whom Paul says, 2. Thes. ii. 8. "whom " the Lord will consume with the spirit of his " mouth, and destroy with the brightness of " his coming,"—Such is the kingdom given to the saints, according to the Old Testament prophets. Nor is the New Testament less explicit in ascertaining our title to the earth.

When our Lord is opening his mouth to proclaim

the blessings of the gospel, he does not say that his friends shall sojourn on the earth as strangers, or even have a residence in it only, but "blessed are the meek: for they shall in-

herit the earth." Matt. v. 5. This predic-

tion we know is not verified in the present state of things, as all, even the best, are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. But Peter informs us that this happy æra will commence at the dissolution of the present system; when God will create a new heavens and a new earth, according to his promise, Is. lxxv. 17.

lxxvi. 22. This is the hope, not of such as shall be born at that period only, but of all the saints.

All are represented by Peter as "looking for

"and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord,

"wherein the heavens being on fire shall be disol-

"ved, and the elements shall melt with fervent

"heat, the earth also and the works that are

"therein shall be burnt up." This, however,

shall not make void the promise of God, for

"nevertheless *we*, according to his promise,

"look for a new heavens and a new earth,

"wherein dwelleth righteousness." This was

the hope of christians even in Peter's time,

for he adds "wherefore, beloved, seeing that

"ye

"ye look for such things, &c." 2. Pet. iii. 12, 13, 14. This hope is common to all the redeemed: and hence is made the subject of their song. Rev. v. 9, 10. "thou hast made us to our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*" This must be in the new heavens and the new earth, according to the prophecy of Isaiah. c. lxvi. 21, 22.—So true is it, that of "the time of the restitution of all things God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began."

Thus the church of God has, in all periods, a title to earthly as well as to spiritual privileges, an earth as well as a heaven. Eden was first given to the righteous man: and Eden then was a specimen of what the whole earth shall be in the process of Ages. The spiritual blessings man enjoyed therein made it also an apt figure of the new heavens, as well as of the new earth. The throne of God, the river and tree of life, the blessings of the new earth, are all described in terms obviously borrowed from the state of things in Eden.—The same may be said of Canaan. This land was disposed to Israel, both as a specimen and figure of the new heavens and new earth. The Jerusalem

built in it was a figure of heavenly things, or of that new Jerusalem, which shall come down from God out of heaven, to be the glory of the new earth. Rev. xxi. 10, 11. Then the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them; when he shall have made all things new. This new Jerusalem is preparing in heaven—it is reserved in heaven for us; and hence is called the heavenly Jerusalem, a city not of this building; but at last she shall come down from God out of heaven, that the nations of them that are saved may walk in the light thereof. Then all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and the saints shall reign with him on the earth. This kingdom, perhaps, shall at first only extend to the utmost lines of the Roman empire, where the papal authority has been acknowledged. This it is probable shall be the kingdom, in which the saints shall reign with Christ a thousand years; while the civil powers or beasts beyond that boundary, in the four quarters of the world, shall be in perfect subjection to Jesus, being awed by the sword proceeding out of his mouth, or by the terrors of his authority. This

seems

seems to agree with Daniel's description, c. viii. 11, 12. When the judgment sits and the books are first opened, v. 10, only the Roman beast is slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame; while his kingdom is given to the saints of the most High, v. 27, yet after this we are told, that as to "the rest of the beasts they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time," or till the thousand years were expired. Rev. xx. 7, 8. During this period all these dominions shall serve and obey Christ, Dan. vii. 27. so that "there shall be one Lord and his name One," Zech. xiv. 9. Again, at the end of this season and time, the rebellion of these other beasts or nations shall bring on the general judgment, the final destruction of the world of the ungodly; and the new heavens and new earth shall appear in full perfection, when "the sinner shall be consumed from the earth, and ill men shall no more be." Ps. civ. last. Thus he will drive out the Canaanites before us by little and little, until "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."—This is the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus

Christ, into which an abundant entrance shall be ministred to all the saints of God.

But you will say, all this will not prove that believers in Christ have any present right to an earthly inheritance. To this I reply—The earth is given to Christ for a possession, and consequently to his people; for he has disposed to them a kingdom even as the father has disposed it to him. But there is a difference between a right and actual possession. All the kingdoms on earth belong to Christ by right, but he suffers his enemies to possess them at present, untill the time appointed by the father. His saints, then, cannot inherit the earth untill their Lord shall take to him his great power and reign; for they can only reign with him. In the meantime they must be in subjection to the powers that are, and that by their Lord's authority. He is prince of the kings of the earth; ruling in the kingdom of men, he gives it to whomsoever he wills. His people, then, have no business to oppose these, to whom their Lord has been pleased to give the kingdom of men. Yet still this kingdom is disposed to them, and they shall possess it at Christ's appearance and his kingdom.

To

To understand this fully, we must attend to the case of Abraham and his seed. He had the grant of the land of Canaan given to him and his seed, when he came out of his native land, yet when he came to the land of promise, he was but a stranger and pilgrim in it, having not a foot of property save a burying-place for himself and family; nor did his seed get actual possession of that inheritance, till 430 years after the right was confirmed by God in Christ. In like manner they that are Christ's and so Abraham's seed, must sojourn as strangers in the earth; they must serve, like Israel, the Pharaohs and Nebuchadnezzars of the world, who have now afflicted and oppressed them for many centuries. The chains of the spiritual Babylon and Egypt have, indeed, been broken, and liberty proclaimed to Israel for some time past, yet still the wilderness is before them, which they must pass before they can enter the promised inheritance. Such the present state of things is to the christian: and such the coming scenes will be, until the time of the restitution of all things. Then "evil doers shall be cut off; Jerusalem shall be built on her own hill, the joy of all the earth. The

meek

“ meek shall inherit the earth ; and shall
 “ delight themselves with the abundance of
 “ peace.”

Thus they, that are of faith are still blessed
with faithful Abraham. We are heirs with
him of the same promise, and shall sit down
with him in the kingdom of God. He must
enjoy Canaan in person ; for God said, “ unto
“ thee will I give this land.” The same pro-
mise is sure to all the seed. The promise is in
Christ, and in him we obtain the inheritance.
 Not an inheritance in the present constitution
 of the earth, reserved for fire, and soon to be
 melted with fervent heat. Nevertheless we,
 according to his promise, look for a new heavens
 and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteous-
 ness : and all shall have their dwelling there,
who love his blessed name ; each standing in
his own happy lot at the end of the days.

O let me seek the city's sacred height,
 Whose walls eternal, on foundations firm,
 No gulphs e'er threaten, and no storms can shake !
 Whose gates are glory, and salvation strong
 Her tow'ring bulwark. Where for ever shines
 The Light himself, ador'd ; and on the just

Four

Pours an unfading beam, completing all
The prophet's promise, and the patriarch's hope.

I am,

S I R,

Yours &c.

L E T T E R IX.

S I R,

HAVING examined the Abrahamic covenant and found that its two promises are but branches of the great original promise of the seed; that both are lodged in Christ, in whom all the believing seed have a right to both, and that in all the ages of measured duration, until the kingdom shall be delivered up to the father—I propose now to review your ideas of, what the scriptures call “the token of that covenant,” even circumcision.

In

In your 7th letter to Mr Glas, you have expressed your views on that point clearly enough.

“Circumcision was hereditary to the old Israel, and by God’s appointment entailed on their fleshly seed—The typical Israel was born of the flesh—The ordinance of circumcision belonged only to the temporal promise, and the temporal typical relation betwixt God and Abraham’s seed according to the flesh—The fleshly birth sufficiently distinguished the subjects of circumcision—To partake of this privilege, it was necessary they should be the fleshly seed of Abraham.”

p. 57—68.

Such is your opinion : and it must be owned it is neither *novel* nor *singular*. Mr Booth has quoted a multitude of celebrated authors, all agreeing with you, on the whole, in your ideas of the Abrahamic covenant and its token. Error, however, cannot plead prescription ; nor can all the writings in the world change a falsehood into truth.

1st. According to you, circumcision belonged only to Abraham’s seed according to the flesh ; which fleshly birth sufficiently distinguished the subjects of circumcision.—Here a

- variety

variety of difficulties occur. Did Abraham beget Eliezer of Damascus, and all the servants of his household, born in it, or bought with his money? Yet were not all these commanded to be circumcised at the same time with himself and his seed? Gen. xvii. 12, 13, 27. Now as we are told, (Gen. xiv. 14.) that he had at least 318 men-servants trained for war, besides children, all sons of the stranger, not of his seed, is it not evident that descent from Abraham's flesh gave no exclusive title to circumcision; yea that one only of his seed was circumcised at first, while above four hundred Gentiles received the same token of the covenant? Again, every proselyte from among the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham was circumcised in all the ages of the Jewish state; so that many thousands received the token of the covenant, who had no fleshly connection with Abraham. Every such proselyte too, had a right to circumcise his child. Was this by descent from Abraham's flesh? Besides, was any stranger of any nation, Amalek and a few others excepted, excluded from the congregation of the Lord on professing the faith? Or, could they be admitted to that congregation without

without circumcision? If not, how did “the
“fleshly birth sufficiently distinguish the subjects
“of this institution?”—What absurdity so big
“that prejudice cannot swallow!

2ndly, You say, That “circumcision was
“hereditary to old Israel and entailed by God’s
“appointment on their fleshly seed.”—How
then did Ishmael partake of it, who was not of
Israel at all? How could Abraham give 3 or
400 strangers an equal share in it with his own
son? The same thing was done by his posterity in future ages. It seems Israel must have been complaisant indeed, when they admitted strangers so readily to share with them in an inheritance entailed on them by divine appointment! Moreover, if they inherited by entail,
the privilege was unalienably fixed in their persons. How came they then to lose it? They are Abraham’s fleshly seed still, yet Paul tells them they are now the *concision* only, and not the circumcision at all. Philip. iii. 2, 3. Now
believers in Christ only are the circumcision. Again, Esau lost his birthright, for himself and his offspring, and consequently all title to circumcision as a sign of right, to the temporal promise; yet was not he and his sons of Abraham’s fleshly seed as well as Jacob?

3dly,

3dly, You aver, That circumcision "distinguished the fleshly seed of Abraham:" yet we have seen multitudes circumcised, and that by divine appointment, who were not of Abraham's seed. How could this badge distinguish Isaac and Ishmael from the servants of the household, bought with money, or begotten by slaves? The Egyptians, Ethiopians and some others practised circumcision also. Must they too be sprung from Abraham? Yea, any man of any nation had a divine title to circumcision on professing the faith of Israel: could this make him the offspring of Abraham's flesh?

4thly, You consider circumcision as a sign or token of a right to the temporal promise, or inheritance of Canaan. It was certainly then the sign of a lie. Ishmael was circumcised by divine appointment, and yet at the same time God excluded him from any title to Canaan, or any temporal privilege of Abraham's covenant. The same is true of Esau and all his posterity: they were circumcised, but had no inheritance in Canaan. Proselytes, too, were circumcised, as were the slaves and servants of Israel, yet this rite conferred no right on them to inherit the land given to Is-

rael, as I have already demonstrated.—Your assertion, then, is so paradoxical, that I know not how to make either sense or truth of it.

5thly, Circumcision, you say, was a sign of the old covenant, or “belonged to the temporal promise”—the promise of the temporal possession of Canaan.—This is a leading principle in your system, and as such merits a particular consideration. What renders it at least doubtful is, that Paul tells us the old covenant was not made till 400 years after that, whereof circumcision was the token, and his master informs us that circumcision was “not of Moses but of the fathers.” Add to this, when the old covenant was ratified no person was circumcised at all; yea for 36 years after this, circumcision was in disuse among Israel, until they had arrived at Canaan. It is not easy to see, then, how this rite could be the token of that covenant, since it was not performed, neither at the ratification of it nor so long after.

The truth is, this matter hitherto has been altogether mistaken. The temporal promise given to Abraham, which was the basis of the Sinai covenant, is to be found in the 15th
chapter

chapter of Genesis. There we read of a grant
or covenant God gave to Abram, saying "un-
"to thy seed will I give this land," marking
out at the same time, the boundaries of that
temporal possession with the utmost accuracy,
and ascertaining the period of entry to the pos-
session of the promised inheritance. v. 13—21.
Of this grant Abram desired a token, saying,
"Lord God, whereby shall I know that I
"shall inherit it?" v. 8. On this occasion
God shewed him the token, the symbol of ra-
tification, in a vision. A sacrifice of beasts is
ordered, that Abram might see by what *symbol*
his seed was to take infestment of the land,
when the promise should receive its final rati-
fication at Sinai. Here is not a word of cir-
cumcision but of sacrifice. The blood of beasts,
not the blood of circumcision, was the token
or seal of that old covenant.

The covenant, whereof circumcision was the
sign, is recorded in the 17th Chapter of Gen.
 This you call the old covenant, which has
 now vanished away with its *symbol*. Assertions,
 however, avail nothing: Let us examine its
 contents, that we may see what it really is.

1st, The promise or grant here given by God to Abram is—"Thou shalt be a father, of many nations—I will make nations of thee."

v. 4, 5, 6. Now, whatever reference this may have to the numerous issue of his body, yet Paul assures us this was not the principal blessing intended in the promise. He quotes this very promise in Rom. iv. 17. and explains it in the most unequivocal terms. Abraham "received the sign

"of circumcision—that he might be the father

"of all them that believe, whether circumcised or

"uncircumcised—Who is the father of us all,

"as it is written, I have made thee a father

"of many nations." v. 11—17. By this grant,

then, he is not made a father of a carnal, un-

believing seed, but of a believing seed among

all nations, even of all who walk in the steps of

his faith. This promise stands to all generati-

ons, and is most fully accomplished under the

new testament dispensation. Is it possible,

then, that this can be the covenant or grant,

which waxed old and vanished away in Paul's

time, while Paul assures us, that it only had

begun to receive its full accomplishment in that

very period.—This grant, then, is not the same

with that in Gen. xv. as this last respects only

his

his natural seed, who should believe, convey-
ing to them a temporal inheritance: whereas
the promise under review respects all that be-
lieve, whether Jew or Greek. This promise,
 then is the same with that recorded, Gen. xii.

3. "In thee shall all the families of the earth
"be blessed"; and consequently is the basis of
what Paul calls the New Testament or Diatheke.

2ndly, In this grant we find also the promise
 of the land of Canaan, v. 8. "I will give to
 "thee, and thy seed after thee, the land of
"thy sojournings, even all the land of Canaan."
 Is not this, you will say, the old covenant;
 the same with that mentioned in Gen. xv. 18
—21? I answer, It is not. The seed there
spoken of is evidently the natural seed of Ab-
ram, and none else,—a seed who were to serve
the Egyptians, and be afflicted 400 years; af-
ter which they should come out with great sub-
stance, and enter Canaan in the fourth genera-
tion. v. 13—16.—But the seed in this 17th
chapter includes all believers; to all whom Ab-
raham is here constituted a father, as we have
already seen.—The Canaan, too, described in
chapter 15th is the land which was given only
to Israel after the flesh; partly in the days of

Joshua, and the remainder in the reign of David and Solomon. This was but a pledge and figure of the land promised in Chapter 17th. The Canaan dispoſed here is an inheritance ſure to all the believing ſeed of Abraham. So Paul explains it—"The promiſe that he ſhould
 " be heir of the World is of grace, to the end
 " that the promiſe may be ſure to all the ſeed,
 " not to that only which is of the law, but to
 " that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham,
 " who is the father of us all." Rom. iv. 13, 16. Now if all the believing ſeed ſhall inherit that Canaan; this cannot take place till the ſecond appearance of Meſſiah, as they will not be all born before that period. When he comes men will be marrying and giving in marriage. Conſequently, the land here promiſed is the inheritance reſerved in heaven for us; a kingdom which ſhall appear with Chriſt in the new heavens and new earth.—In this ſenſe Abraham himſelf underſtood this promiſe; for he ſought "a better country, even
 "an heavenly;" and if his God had not promiſed him ſuch a country, how could he ſeek it in faith?

In correspondence with this view of the promised land, it is said to be given "for an everlasting possession." v. 8. and the grant disposing it "an everlasting covenant." No such epithet is conferred on the covenant in Gen. 15. as it only granted the temporal possession of a small part or specimen of Abraham's inheritance.—To get rid of this argument you aver, that "this covenant is called everlasting" "with respect to the antitype."—How jejune and evasive this comment! It overthrows the faith of christians. The new covenant is called the everlasting covenant. This by your interpretation means a covenant of short duration. Farewel, then, ye sweet hopes of the gospel!—Poetry may admit of such liberties of expression, but law requires words and phrases of the most ascertained and unequivocal sense. Now the grant before us is written in the style of law; and consequently in terms of no ambiguity.—A mercy it is you was not made a lawyer! Every *Charter*, conveying property in *fee simple* or for ever must have been explained by you as a *Tack* of limited duration! Or are the words of God less accurate than these of men?

3dly, The antients only got ~~a new~~ name, when exalted to higher offices, relations or honours, or when some new remarkable event had befallen them. Here Abraham receives a new name, expreffive of the new dignity conferred on him, as standing in the relation of a father to believers in Chrift of all nations. A certain evidence, that this is a new covenant far more honourable than that granted him in the 15th Chapter.

4thly, In this grant God fays “I will be a God to thee, and to thy feed after thee—I will be their God.” v. 7, 8. This promife fays, 1st, That he would prepare for them a heavenly city. So Paul explains it, Heb. xi. 16. “They defire a better country, an heavenly: wherefore God is not afhamed to be called *their God*; for he hath prepared for them a city.” The feed mentioned in the grant is all the believing feed, who never can meet in any one city in the prefent world. 2dly, It means the refurrection from the dead to life eternal, that they may enjoy the eternal inheritance. So our Lord explains it, Luke, xx. 37, 38. “Now that the dead are raifed even Mofes fhewed at the bufh, when he calleth

“the

“the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living.” All, to whom Jehovah is a God must be raised from the dead; for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living. —This is the promise our Saviour has promised us, even eternal life. This then is the covenant of better hopes.

5thly, It deserves observation, that God calls this grant by the distinguished epithet, my covenant. Thus he called it when he established it with Noah, Gen. vi. 18. “With thee will I establish my covenant.” Thus he calls it when given to Abraham—“Behold my covenant is with thee. Gen. xvii. 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14. Thus also when he settled it in the time of Isaac. He had blessed Ishmael, and promised to make him a great nation. v. 26. But, adds he “my covenant will I establish with Isaac.” v. 21. This must be the blessing God gave by promise to Adam, the seed Christ, whom God calls his Berith, given to the people. He is the centre of all blessings, and the channel through which all flow to the sons of men. To give him all things then, is to give all things with him. We are informed by Paul, that the promises were all strictly speaking,

speaking, made to him, and that in him they are all yea and amen. So that wherever he was, there were all the promises. Accordingly we find the whole grant, recorded in this chapter, summed up in the promise of a son, even Isaac. with whom God proposes to establish his co- venant; or, in other words, to make good all his promises by sending his son on the line of Isaac, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.—This is what Paul calls preaching the gospel to Abraham. This Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

As this patriarch's faith must have corresponded with the revelation God gave him, we can easily see what were the articles of his belief. He believed, 1st, That he should have a son in his old age, even Isaac; 2ndly, That in his line the Messiah, the seed of the promise, should take flesh; 3dly, That this seed should be made heir of the world, or of all things; 4thly, That all the families of the earth should be blessed in him with a part or lot in that in- heritance; 5thly, That he and all who believed this record of God in every nation should in- herit these promises, and consequently be raised from the dead for that purpose.—Such was the
faith

faith that saved before Christ came: such is
the faith that saves still. Abraham believed
that the promises would be accomplished: we
believe that the seed is come, and that all the
promises in him either have been, or shall be
fulfilled in their time. Thus there is but a cir-
cumstantial difference betwixt the faith of be-
lievers in all the ages of time.

This, then, it is manifest, is the constitution
of which Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 17. "Thus I
"say the covenant that was confirmed before of
"God in or unto Christ, the law which was
"430 years after, cannot disannul, that it
"should make the promise of none effect." The
plan of heaven for the salvation of mankind
was made known by a royal edict, 430 years
before the law, or Sinai constitution, was made,
and was never intended to be altered by the
law of Moses. What Jeremiah and Paul call
the *new covenant*, is but a deed of *Infeſtment*
and *ſaſine* given, in terms of the *diſpoſition*
lodged with Abraham, to these, who believed
in all nations. The receiving of the promise
of the spirit through faith, writing the law
on the heart, is the principal part of this new
" covenant

covenant; and this is expressly called "The blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Gal. iii. 14.

Such is the covenant, of which circumcision was the *sign* or *token*; not a constitution which waxeth old, but a covenant which stands to a thousand generations.—The only argument you adduce in support of your opinion is, that circumcision is enjoined in the law of Moses, (Lev. xii. 3,) from whence you conclude, that it must be the sign of the Sinai-covenant. A strange argument this! In the same law we have another command "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart: and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x. 16. This is a law of Moses: consequently by your argument, it too must be a sign of the old covenant! The truth is, circumcision is no where called the sign or token of the Sinai-covenant; nor is it so much as mentioned when the people were taken into that covenant. The blood of bulls was the sole sign of Israel's entering into that temporary constitution of things.—Ex. xxiv.

Let us, then, take Paul's plain account of this institution, and we may be assured it will bear the strictest scrutiny—"He received the
" sign

“sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had being uncircumcised” Rom. iv. 11. It was a sign and seal, not of the righteousness of the law, or of any right to privileges conferred by the law, but of the righteousness of the faith, or in other words, of a right of pure grace:—This shall be the subject of my next. In the meantime I remain,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R X.

S I R,

PHILOSOPHERS and wits of the infidel-class have long considered circumcision as a subject of derision. An operation, so indelicate and so needless in their view, must be unworthy

worthy of infinite wisdom: and indeed if the end and design of that appointment be not properly attended to, even the wise and good must be puzzled in accounting for its propriety. Your ideas on this head seem to me very absurd—calculated only to darken the subject. Indeed if human-authorities could justify your mistakes, you can produce an abundance of that kind. Your brother Mr Booth has performed this service for you, in his *Padobaptism examined*, &c; in which fifty eminent authors are quoted in support of your opinion, whose ideas on this point I now propose to examine.

1st, By your opinion, circumcision was intended to be “a sign of carnal descent,” or of descent from the flesh of Abraham.—If this was the intention of God in appointing circumcision, it never did nor could answer its end. Even Isaac by this mark could not ascertain his descent, as all the numerous male servants of the household wore the same badge. Any man of any nation might become a proselyte to Abraham’s faith; and every such proselyte was circumcised. Was this a badge of carnal descent? Common sense will make a proper reply.

2ndly,

2ndly, It was a mark of national distinction,
or a distinguishing character of judaism,—A
strange blunder this ! How could this distin-
guish Israel from the Arabs, Egyptians, Edo-
mites, Moabites and Ammonites,—all of which
practised circumcision. The circumcised pro-
 selyte, too, was not considered as a native of
 Judea, but was still called “ a stranger sojourn-
 ing with Israel.”—A certain evidence that
 this rite was never intended as a mark of na-
 tional distinction.

3dly. You consider it as a sign of a right to
 the terrestrial inheritance and temporal bleff-
 ings promised to Abraham. If so, it must have
 been such a token to Ishmael and the servants
 of Abram's household ; and consequently was
 the sign of a *lie* ; as the promise of the *temporal*
 possession of Canaan was confined to Isaac and
 his descendants. Ten thousand proselytes, too,
were circumcised ; none of whom had any
claim by promise to the temporal inheritance
disponed to the seed of Isaac in the old cove-
nant.—So absurd are all your ideas on this
 point ! So dangerous is it to leave the plain
tract of scripture, and to follow the devious

paths of Hypothesis—an ignis fatuus seducing us into a quagmire of absurdity.

Church of God
Preaching is
of the Faith

We have seen that circumcision was made the sign or token of the everlasting covenant, given to Abraham. Its design in general, then, must have been to confirm the faith of Abraham and his seed in the truth of the promise, and of *right* which they had by faith to all the promised blessings.

But to obtain a full view of this subject it is necessary to understand, 1st, What in this covenant circumcision was a sign of, 2ndly, What it signified or sealed with respect to God; 3dly, What it expressed on the part of the circumcised;—attending at the same time to the propriety of this sign for answering these several purposes.

1. The leading promise given to Abraham was that of Messiah, the seed to whom all the promises are made, taking flesh of his seed; and as this was the principal part of the covenant, we may be sure circumcision was chiefly intended to express or *signify* that glorious fact. This is what Abraham believed, when it was reckoned to him for righteousness; Gen. xv. 3—7. And Paul tells us that circumcision

was

was a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had before he was circumcised; consequently it was a sign of this very fact, which believed produces the same effect, a sense of righteousness or acceptance with God, in the hearts of all the children of the promise. In this view, how proper was the sign of circumcision! Sealed in "the hill of the foreskin," the appointed vehicle for conveying the elements of human existence, it lively expressed these truths, Messiah was to be a man and that he would take flesh of the seed of Abraham.—Wisdom herself could not have chosen a more expressive sign.

2. Cutting off the foreskin, in this view, evidently expressed the manner, in which the Messiah, the seed of Abraham, should convey the promised blessings to mankind; even by being "put to death in the flesh, cut off from "the land of the living, or by the blood of his "cross." Not by his birth in the flesh, but by the blood of his cutting off, or by the circumcision of his flesh by death, does the blessing of Abraham come on all the spiritual seed. Hence his blood is called "The blood of the "New Testament," the true seal of the Testament given to Abraham in its new state, where-

in its blessings are fully administered to all the children of the promise.

3. Through this blood of Messiah's death, or cutting off, the body of the sins of our flesh is cut off also, or "our old man is crucified" "with him." Rom. vi. 6. Believing that he was put to death in the flesh, we arm ourselves with the same mind, and are disposed to give up this mortal body with all its lusts into the hand of God, that it may be destroyed, that henceforth we may not serve sin. That circumcision was intended to be a sign of this, is attested both by Moses and Paul. "Circum-
"cise or cut off," says Moses, "the foreskin of
"your hearts." Deut. x. 16. "In whom
" (in Christ) also ye are circumcised with the
"circumcision made without hands, in putting
"off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the
"circumcision of Christ," says Paul, Col. ii.
11. Here it is evident, that putting off the
body in which sin dwells is the thing signified
by circumcision, and that this is effected "by
"the circumcision of Christ," or by his death,
which is represented both by circumcision and
baptism. It is also plain from these texts that
what Moses calls "the foreskin of the heart,"

Paul

the putting off the body of sin.
is represented by the circumcision
of the promised seed.

Paul calls it "the body of the sins of the flesh
"—our old man." This outward man must
 be put off, that the inward man may exert
 himself in all the delightful exercises of divine
 love. The heart, enslaved by the flesh and
 its lusts, cannot love God. Hence, says Mo-
 ses, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine
"heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine
"heart, and with all thy soul &c." Deut. xxx.
 6.—In this view, how expressive was the sign
of circumcision! So obvious and striking is the
 analogy, that I need not enter on particulars.

II. With respect to God, this institution
signified and sealed his firm purpose to fulfil all
that he had promised; that he would send his
son of Abraham's seed according to the flesh,
and that all the other blessings promised should
be connected with and conveyed through him.
 Moreover, by giving this sign to strangers, not
 of Abraham's seed by nature, he evidently in-
 dicated his intention to confer the blessing of
 Abraham on the Gentiles as well as the Jews,
 —in terms of the promise, in thy seed shall
all the families of the earth be blessed. Also,
 by bestowing it on infants he showed, that
 "of such is the kingdom of God."

By giving the sign of
 circumcision to the
 Gentiles, God showed
 that he intended to
 bless them as well as
 the Jews, and that
 the kingdom of God
 was not of such as
 were of the flesh
 only, but of such
 as were of the
 Spirit.

III. With regard to the persons circumcised; every adult by submitting to this operation professed faith in the accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham, that the Saviour should be of his seed, and that all blessings were connected with him. In this respect the circumciser and the circumcised were one. The rite itself was a sign and seal of the righteousness of the faith, or of our justification by faith. This it signified to Abraham: this it signified to his household. It is not probable, that any adult would have suffered Abraham to perform so painful an operation upon him, had he not believed in the divinity of its institution, and been instructed at least in its principal design.

But you say, "circumcision is indeed called a seal of the righteousness of the faith; but it was a seal only to Abraham of his own faith." He received circumcision as a "fa-

ther to his natural seed as such." p. 60, 61.

So you and many before you have said. But let us hear Paul—"He received the sign of circumcision—that he might be the father of all them that believe." With respect to circumcision, then, as well as uncircumcision, he

was

was a father only to them that believed. Now, did his natural children as such believe; if not, how could circumcision signify that he was a father to his natural seed as such? Since it only denoted him to be the father of believers? This circumcision evidently pointed out—telling his natural offspring that they could not be counted as Abraham's seed, unless they believed in the seed of the promise; in consequence of which belief he himself had been circumcised. Not as a natural but as a believing father did Abraham receive the sign of circumcision: consequently none could be his children in that respect in which he was circumcised, but such as believed as he did.—This is the uniform doctrine of Paul. He assures the Jews, that where faith in the Messiah is wanting, outward circumcision cannot denote any man to be the seed of Abraham; as it was originally intended to be a seal of the righteousness of the faith. He never was a Jew who was only such outwardly.—This is common sense;

But how absurd is your hypothesis! If Abraham received circumcision as a natural father, why did he circumcise the servants of his household,

hold, to whom he stood in no such relation? Again, if your idea be just, the blessings of the covenant whereof circumcision was the sign must have been unalienably entailed on Abraham's posterity as such, whether they believed or not. Why then, did God exclude Ishmael and Esau from these privileges? Why did multitudes of Israel fall in the wilderness, and came short of the promises? Why exclude all the unbelieving Jews from all these privileges for 1700 years? Are they not Abraham's natural seed? Your hypothesis can furnish you with no answer: but would you stoop to hear Paul, he would tell you, no professed unbeliever had any title to circumcision or the blessings it sealed. Hence Ishmael was cast out because he persecuted the child of the promise with cruel mockings; Esau, because he despised the promised seed; Israel in the wilderness, "because they believed not God, nor trusted in his salvation;" the Jews after Messiah came, because they believed not that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, but said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him." These have practised circumcision, but it is of the Egyptian kind, not Abraham's; the concision, a mangling

mangling of the flesh, not a sign of the righteousness of the faith, which was the circumcision given to Abraham.

But you will reply—Where are we told that Abraham's servants believed; or could children of eight days old believe? Yet these were circumcised. How, then, was this rite a sign of their believing?

The scripture affords us a full and plain answer to these questions. "Jehovah said, "shall I hide from Abraham the thing which "I do: seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the "nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? "For I know him that he will command his "children and his household after him, and "they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do "justice and judgment; that the Lord may "bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19. Here it is evident, 1st, That the promise given to Abraham was connected with his faith, and that it was to be fulfilled to him only through his fidelity in teaching his children and household the way of the Lord, and commanding them to walk in it, 2ndly, As circumcision was the

seal

ful of this very promise, it must also have been connected with this faith, in all that received it.

3dly, As Ishmael the Son was now thirteen years of age, he and all the servants of the household must have been instructed in the way of the Lord and walking in it at least by external profession: "I know," says Jehovah, "that he will command his children and his household, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Consequently they received cir-

cumcision as professors of his faith, and not, as you and your brethren aver, whether they believed or not.

The same was the case with regard to all the strangers in the households of Israel afterwards: none of them were permitted to profess idolatry.

4thly, Infants were commanded to be circumcised not simply on account of the faith of their parents, but because the education of the children in that faith made it certain that this would be the faith of the children.

That the faith of the parent will be the faith of the child while in youth, is as certain as that a believing parent will teach the faith to his children.

Hence we can call an infant of a believer a believing child with as much propriety as we can call it a rational

creature.

creature. That it will believe, i. e. know and profess the faith is as certain as that it will reason. Accordingly God commanded Abraham, to circumcise his infant-seed, not because they were his natural seed, but because he knew that he would command his children, and they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

The household of Abraham was an household of faith. None could receive its privileges or continue in the household but on a *supposition* of or a *profession* of the faith. The case of Ishmael puts this beyond all doubt. While he professed or did not deny the faith he was retained in the household: but the instant he began to discover his infidelity by scoffing at the seed in whose line the promise was about to be fulfilled, and so mocking at the faith of Abraham, he was cast out of the family with indignation, and circumcision became to him as uncircumcision.

2ndly, Abraham's circumcising the strangers in his household, and their submitting to be circumcised, was an obvious sign, on the part of both, that they believed that Jews and Gentiles had an equal claim to the blessings sealed

by circumcision. This at least was the meaning of the action. The promised blessing was that Abraham should be the father of many nations, or that in his seed of the line of Isaac all the families of the earth should be blessed. Of this covenant circumcision was the sign; and how properly did it express the thing signified, being administered at the same time to Jew and Gentile! So plainly was this fellowship of Jew and Gentile pointed out in the primary institution of circumcision! It was afterwards lost indeed by the pride and ignorance of the Jews; and so became a mystery hid from ages and generations, until it was again manifested to the apostles of Christ.

3dly, Submitting to be circumcised, as Abraham was, was a sign of obligation to obey as he did. Abraham's faith in the promise disposed him to obey every command of God addressed to him: and our Lord tells the Jews "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Hence when the Mosaic law was added 430 years after this, circumcision denoted their obligation to obey this also. It was added to the promise, and subserved the accomplishment of what God had
spoken

spoken to Abraham concerning the seed about to come and the blessing in him. This it did by commanding men "to keep the way of the Lord and to do justice and judgment." In this view Paul testifies "to every one that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Gal. v. 3.—In this respect circumcision was connected with the law of Moses, but in no other.

In the above view of things, the ends and purposes of circumcision indicate, the highest wisdom and design—Worthy to come forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel: whereas all your conceptions of that subject are trifling, absurd and inconsistent.

Before I conclude, I cannot help animadverting with some acrimony on another common idea of the design of circumcision, as if the supreme Lord had intended thereby to fix a stigma of infamy upon the appetite, organ and act, by which he had proposed to carry on his process of creative power in the continuation of the human species. Every person of common understanding, attending to what has been said, will easily see, that the very reverse is the fact. That which *impedes* the joy and

effect of this process was indeed stigmatized with infamy, being cut off in circumcision; but the *print* left by that operation,—was evidently intended as a sign of honour,—of no less honour than that resulting from a connection with that seed of Abraham, on whom the happiness of mankind depends for eternity. Had God commanded this mark to be imprinted on the heathen, there might have been some apology found for the above opinion; but to imagine that when he intended to confer the highest honour that ever was given to man, the honour of being the father of that seed in whom all the blessings of heaven were lodged, that he at the same time, as a sign of this dignity, fixed a mark of infamy upon the very vehicle and act by which he proposed to accomplish this glorious purpose, or to convey this blessing to man,—is certainly the spawn of monastic delirium, hatched in the darkest cell of superstition—a frenzy happily unknown in Israel, who viewed it as their highest honour, to have an offspring, numerous as the sand on the seashore,—as the stars of heaven for multitude.

I am,

S I R,

Yours &c.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

S I R,

I PROPOSE in this epistle to review your ideas of baptism, and the objections you and your brethren produce against the argument, taken from circumcision, in support of infant-baptism.

In p. 66. of *letters to Mr Glas*, you tell us : —“ The spiritual seed of Abraham are heirs according to the promise, to whom belong all spiritual privileges, baptism among the rest.” Had you professed Quakerism this proposition would have been entirely in character. If baptism by the Holy Spirit, exclusive of water, be the whole baptism instituted by Christ, then undoubtedly baptism is a spiritual blessing indeed. But as baptism with water is the only subject of dispute between you and your opponents, it is hard to conceive what idea you annex to the above words. You contest that

baptism means immersion in water. If so, I own I am too dull to apprehend any spirituality either in the water or in the act of immersing in it. If the spiritual blessings conferred by Jesus Christ be all of a piece with this, they will avail us little. Simon Magus was baptized, who was still in the bond of iniquity, destitute of the spirit. The law had diverse baptisms, yet these Paul calls "carnal ordinances." When water or dipping in it became spiritual, I know not.—If you say, baptism has a spiritual design; so had all the washings appointed by the law; in which respect the law is said to be spiritual. Every such washing pointed to the office of Messiah, whose business it is to give the spirit, cleansing us with clean water from all our filthiness and from all our idols. Separated from the spirit, as it is in innumerable instances, baptism now is no less carnal than any one of the washings instituted by the law.—So great is your mistake with respect to the nature of baptism. Yet this false notion, together with your misconceptions concerning the design both of circumcision and baptism, is the foundation of all your arguments against the idea of the succession of baptism to circum-

cission;

cision; or that baptism serves the same purposes in the New-Testament state of the church which circumcision answered in the old.

Your arguments on this subject I now propose to consider: nor shall I here confine my enquiries to yours only, but shall also animadvert on those of your brethren Mr Booth, D^r Anvers, Venema, &c.

1st, You aver, that baptism belongs to the true Israel, the spiritual seed, whereas circumcision belonged to the typical Israel, Lett. 7. p. 57. A gross mistake indeed! By the typical Israel you mean the unbelieving Israel, born of the flesh, and so flesh only; in opposition to Israel born of the spirit. It certainly, then, did not belong to Abraham, for he believed God and received circumcision as a sign of this faith. Nor could it belong to Isaac, who was born by promise. But I need not insist on an absurdity, so fully exposed in the preceding sheets.—The truth is, circumcision belonged to none but to the household of faith, and so in this respect differs nothing from baptism.

2ndly, Circumcision, you say, belonged to the old covenant, but baptism to the new.—In this you err, not knowing the scriptures. I have

have fully proven, that although circumcision
 “ was re-injoined in the law of Moses, it was not
 “ of Moses but of the fathers.” It was not a sign
 or seal of the law given at Sinai, but of the gospel
preached to Abraham. I add, you may as well
say that baptism was a sign of the old covenant,
 since, although it was not of Moses but of the fa-
 thers, yet it was taken into that œconomy, the
 law consisting “ of diverse baptisms.” With res-
pect to its nature and general import, baptism has
been the same in all ages. None dared to ap-
proach God without washing in water under
the old œconomy more than under the
new. There is a difference between an insti-
 tution connected with the old covenant for a
 time, and a law peculiar to it. If you infer
 that circumcision was peculiar to the old cove-
 nant because enjoined in the law of Moses, you
 must also conclude by the same consequence
 that “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
“ all thine heart” was also peculiar to that con-
 stitution.

3dly, You, Mr Booth, and many authors
 quoted by him, agree that birth of the flesh gave
a claim to circumcision; whereas faith or
regeneration

regeneration only furnish a title to baptism. Hence it is concluded, with an air of triumph, that baptism has a design totally different from circumcision. It is truly astonishing with what insolence you and your brethren talk on this subject. Mr Booth (Pedobaptism, p. 306.) avers, that Abraham's male infants, and even adults, were entitled to circumcision, "merely in virtue of their carnal descent. This right they enjoyed independent of sanctifying grace either in themselves or their parents; and even detached from every idea of a pretension to it, in the one or the other. Nay, the domestics of Abraham, whether born in his house, or bought with his money; whether in a carnal or a regenerate state; were as fully intitled to this rite as their venerable master." Impious assertions, though produced by pious writers!—Was circumcision appointed without respect to Abraham's faith? Does not Paul say that he received it as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith?" How then could his seed have a right to this rite independent of faith either in themselves or their parents, and even detached from every idea of a pretension to it, in the one or the

other

“other?” Did not Abraham receive this sign that he might be the father of all them that believed in the circumcision? moreover, it is indisputably evident from what I have said above, that none of his offspring were circumcised without respect to their faith. If any of them apostatized from the faith they were commanded to be cut off from among the people. Circumcision was intended to keep alive the faith of the coming of Messiah, the great promise to which it was annexed. Without this it was uncircumcision, as is clear from Paul’s reasonings, Rom. ii. The unbeliever, who did not keep the law, or the spirit and design of the law, as a pedagogue leading to Christ, never was a Jew. The very infants, were circumcised with respect to their faith. “For I know,” says God, “he will command his children to keep the way of the Lord.” The same is said of his household. They were entitled to this rite as professing the faith of Abraham. None but such were allowed to dwell in his house. “I know him, that he will command his household, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” His household was the household of faith: so

Soon as Ishmael professed unbelief, he was cast out from the household and all its privileges. Birth, in that respect, availed him nothing.— So evident is it, that the fleshly birth never gave any a title to circumcision.

With respect to the design of baptism you also greatly err—confounding two things very distinct—baptism and the external administration of it. Baptism in itself, it is admitted is a sign, as you say, “ of the remission of sins “ by the blood of Christ ;” and in sum—“ of the “ spiritual, eternal, and invisible blessings of his “ kingdom.” This you have illustrated with great propriety, particularly in a late publication. But you mistake its signification with respect to the person baptized—imagining that it denotes his *real* faith or regeneration ; or that he is a real member of the church *invisible*, partaking of all her spiritual, eternal and invisible blessings. On this absurd idea, you aver that, “ there is not the least hint given in “ all the scripture, that baptism is appointed to “ be a *sign* and token of a person’s belonging “ to the kingdom of God as it *appears* in this “ world.”* Consequently baptism must be a
sign

sign of a person's belonging to the invisible church. If so, then baptism is appointed to

be the *sign* of a *lie*, as in innumerable instances even of the apostolic baptism, it was administered to persons in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

When administered to Simon Magus, was it a *sign* of *his* regeneration? You will not say so. What then becomes of your view of its signification?—You have a strange idea of Christ, that he institutes an ordinance which cannot answer his purpose!

According to your scheme, you cannot administer baptism to any but real believers.

They must not only *appear* to be of the kingdom of God but be *really* so.

How then can you baptize at all; unless you profess to search the heart and try the reins of the children of men? Mr Booth establishes the same absurd idea—professing with his favourite *Venema*, p. 274. that “it is not lawful to baptize any one if “he is not *really* a believer.”

The meaning is, the apostles and disciples of Christ were daily acting *unlawfully*, in administering baptism to multitudes, who afterwards drew back to perdition. Also, Jesus Christ has laid his disciples under a necessity to break his laws, by commanding

commanding them to baptize *none* but *real* believers, while he withheld from them the power of judging men's hearts—a power indispensibly necessary to fulfil his law.—Error is always inconsistent with itself, and always blasphemes the conduct of Christ and his apostles.

The truth on the contrary is consistent and quite obvious. Baptism belongs to the visible church, and a visible society must proceed on a visible footing in the administration of her ordinance. *Real* believing makes a member of the invisible church, but while this is unknown he is not a member of a visible church: whereas a profession of faith, whether sincere or not, makes it lawful for a visible church to administer the visible baptism. Thus the apostles acted, and they surely understood their commission. By the baptism of the spirit we become members of the invisible church: not so by the baptism of water. This last is a sign that the person baptized has professed the faith, and so is a sign of his admission to the communion of that visible society, into which he has been initiated. As the church loves the truth he has professed, they must love him for the truth's sake, so far as they see it dwelling

in him. Yet Christ never commanded us to believe that every person professing the faith and baptized is *really* a member of the invisible kingdom of God, he has only commanded us to treat him as such, till he evidences the contrary character.

Thus circumcision and baptism have been administered on the same footing, even a *profession* of the faith of Abraham.

4thly, In conformity with your system, Mr Booth says (p. 305.) "Baptism is an appointment *purely* religious, and intended for purposes *entirely* spiritual: but circumcision had a political aspect, being a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, and a token of interest in those temporal blessings that were promised to Abraham.---" That baptism is an institution purely religious is granted; but that circumcision had any such political aspect as is above mentioned is false, as I have already proved. It was, indeed, a mark of distinction between believers and heathens; but the same is true of baptism. It was no mark of national distinction, as many not of that nation received it. Nor was it a characteristic of judaism (as Dr Erskine phrases it) in any other sense
than

than that in which baptism is a characteristic of christianity. No man was considered as a Jew who was not circumcised; nor can any be considered as a christian who has not been baptized, or at least is ready to submit to baptism. If the Doctor means, that baptism is not a *certain* sign of *real* christianity; it is equally true that circumcision was not a *certain* sign of *real* Judaism. "For he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the spirit."

But, says the Doctor, "Circumcision impressed an *abiding mark*: whereas baptism impresses no abiding mark." This certainly means, that this abiding mark served to ascertain his descent, both to himself when grown up and also to others. Thus D'Anvers explains it, and adds—By this mark one knows not only that he was a Jew, but that he had a right to his father's temporalities. Strange ideas these! the daughters of Zelophehad, I suppose, were at no loss to know their descent or their right to their father's inheritance, although they had no such mark. As many neighbouring nations, also, practised circumcision, no man, merely by inspecting this mark

in his flesh, could be certain whether he was a Jew by birth or not. In vain, too, would the son of a proselyte have produced this mark in a plea of right to an inheritance in Canaan.—
So evident is it that, by this mark, no man could ascertain his descent either to himself or to others.

In this respect, then, circumcision had no pre-eminence above baptism. One could know that he had been circumcised in infancy by a Jew, only by a previous knowledge of his descent and by the testimony of spectators. In the same manner can one's baptism in infancy be ascertained. The parochial register, with the testimony of his parents and other witnesses, renders the fact indubitably certain : whereas although baptism had impressed an abiding mark on his flesh, he could not be certain whether he had been baptized into the faith of Christ or not, as many pagans practise infant-baptism.

5thly, *Venema*, as quoted by Mr Booth, sees a propriety in “imprinting this mark of
 “circumcision in membro genitali, as a sign of
 “a numerous offspring and of temporal bene-
 “fits connected with their very nativity ;” and

hence

hence infers that there is no analogy between circumcision and baptism.—But did not many Jews die in infancy without issue? and of such as grew up to manhood many had few children and others none at all. If circumcision, then, was to be a sign of a numerous offspring, it was, in many instances the sign of a lie! Again, what temporal benefit was connected with the nativity of a slave, or the son of a proselyte? None at all.—So absurd are the ideas of Mr Booth's learned and judicious professor!

But viewing this mark as a sign of the divine purpose to raise up to Israel a Saviour of the seed of Abraham, we at once see an obvious propriety in imprinting it *genitali membro*. Hence also we can easily see why no such mark is appointed now. The birth indicated by circumcision is already produced, and has openly appeared to men. While the Son of the promise was yet the *secret One*, the mark of faith in his appearance might well be worn in the most *secret* part of the body: but now he is publicly manifested his servants must wear his mark in their *foreheads*.

6thly, Mr Booth asks, “if baptism succeeded in the place of circumcision, how came

“ it about that both of them were in full force
 “ at the same time; that is, from the com-
 “ mencement of John’s Ministry to the death
 “ of Christ?” A more absurd question was ne-
 ver put! This author admits that the christian
 baptism was not instituted till after the resur-
 rection of Christ: how, then, could it be in
 full force before his death? The baptism of
 John was not Christ’s.—Of the same kind is
 the question he adds—“ Again: admitting the
 “ succession pretended, how came it that Paul
 “ circumcised Timothy, after he had been bap-
 “ tized?” I answer, If Paul had circumcised
 Timothy by divine authority, or had enjoined
 the observation of that rite on all christians,
 this question would have had some foundation:
 but we are expressly told, that he performed
 this ceremony, not from conscience towards
 God, but from maxims of prudence, “ be-
 “ cause of the Jews, which were in those
 “ quarters.” Acts, xvi. 3.

7thly, D’Anvers says, baptism does not an-
 swer the ends of circumcision, 1stly, because
 “ circumcision was a sign of Christ to come in
 “ the flesh; and baptism that he was already
 “ come in the flesh, witnessing to his incarna-
 “ tion

"tion, death, burial and resurrection."—So far as it goes this is a just enough account of the design of these ordinances; but if the argument founded on it be just, we must also conclude that the apostolic gospel does not answer the end of the gospel preached to Abraham, because *this* declares that Christ was to come in the flesh; and *that* testifies that he is already come.

2ndly, "Circumcision was to be a partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile; but baptism testified the contrary." I answer, if this was the design of circumcision, was it not strange that God, at its first institution, ordered at least an hundred Gentiles to be circumcised for one Jew? An odd kind of partition this! The truth is, circumcision was only a partition betwixt professors of Abraham's faith and the heathens; and such is baptism still. But as any man of any nation, profelyted to the faith, has now a title to baptism; so had he of old to circumcision.

3dly, He adds "circumcision initiated the carnal seed into the carnal church, and gave them a right to the carnal ordinances; but baptism gives the spiritual seed an entrance to
" the

“the spiritual church, and a right to partake
 “of the spiritual ordinances.”—This is all over
 a mistake. Circumcision initiated men to the
Abrahamic church, which stood entirely by
faith. Was this a carnal church? Had it been
intended as a sign of initiation to the Mosaic
church, constituted at Sinai, it would have
certainly been performed at the giving of the
law, as numbers of infants had been born since
the Exodus from Egypt: yet this was so far
 from being the case, that circumcision was al-
 together omitted during the forty years’ jour-
ney in the wilderness. Sprinkling with the blood
of bulls was the sign of entering into the Sinai-
 X constitution; as circumcision was the token of
faith in the promise. The law was added to
 the promise, and the sign of the law to that of
 the promise.—Again, If circumcision was in-
tended to initiate the carnal seed, Ishmael and
his seed only had a right to it, as they were
born after the flesh. Why circumcise the fa-
ther of the faithful, and Isaac the son of th
promise? Sure they were not the carnal seed.—
The truth is, circumcision and baptism were
both instituted to initiate the professors of the
faith of Abraham into the visible church of God,

as a sign of right to the visible ordinances. These ordinances, though carnal or earthly in their nature, were spiritual to the spiritual under the law, as they all had a spiritual design. This is still true under the gospel.—To call Israel the carnal seed and members of visible churches now the spiritual, is the highest absurdity. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul speaks “not to them as to spiritual; but as to *carnal*, and “babes in Christ.” Instead of eating the Lord’s Supper, he tells them, they only eated their own Supper, and not the Lord’s. Was this to them a spiritual ordinance?—Besides, are not Israel called a holy nation; and did they not all eat the same *spiritual meat* and all drink the same *spiritual drink*? Where then lies the difference?

4thly, “Trees and fruits were capable of “circumcision.”—It is strange what absurdities men will produce in support of a favourite opinion! Was circumcision of trees and fruits a token of the covenant? Were they circumcised “in the flesh of the foreskin?” Or did God command Abraham to circumcise trees or fruits? If not, then such circumcision was no religious act or sign of interest in the covenant

of Abraham.—Trees and fruits are just as capable of baptism as of circumcision.

I can only find one other argument produced to disprove the analogy between circumcision and baptism. The former, *Venema* says, was a *type* only, whereas the latter is a *pledge* or *earnest* of what it represents. Where he finds this distinction I know not. The very reverse seems to be the truth. Circumcision was a sign of “the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh;” and was not a part of that very body, as a pledge or earnest of the whole, actually put off in circumcision? Baptism is a sign or figure of the same thing: but washing the body does not cut off any part of it; and consequently in baptism we have no pledge or earnest of the thing signified, but an expressive sign or figure.—If you say, remission of sins is connected with baptism as a pledge of all spiritual blessings—What remission of sins had Simon Magus, who after baptism was yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity?

Thus I have examined your ideas of circumcision and baptism, and also all the arguments produced, by Baptists and self-inconsistent pedit-baptists.

dobaptists, in refutation of the idea of baptism as succeeding circumcision, with respect to its ends and purposes, in the church of God: and I hope you now see that the whole is one continued system of absurdity, founded on the most false and mistaken views of scripture, that ever ignorance presumed to publish to mankind.

When it is said, however, that baptism succeeds circumcision in the New Testament church, it is not meant that this is the sole office of baptism. As an initiatory symbol or token of admission to the visible church of God, it has superseded the use of circumcision by divine appointment; but this is not all. In my Dissertation on Baptism, I have shewed that baptism was appointed as an initiation to the house and service of God. It was so before the law of Moses: it was so in that law, which stood in divers baptisms. This was common to all the Jews, male and female, young and old. By this too all profelytes to the faith of Abraham were admitted to the house of God: and thus also their infants were received. To these other ordinances the law added the sprinkling of blood, which was also administered

administered to all. By this epithet baptism is also called.—Now what can be concluded from all this; but that baptism not only fills the same place, in the New Testament church, which it had in the old, but has also superseded circumcision and the sprinkling of blood, answering the same ends now which they subserved of old?

The consequence is evident and inevitable: infants had a share in each of these rites formerly; and so cannot be excluded from this claim, unless by divine authority. Hence as Jesus Christ made no alteration in this respect, to divest infants of this right, is to act from caprice, not from respect to the laws of religion.

I know, indeed, what your brother Mr Booth has objected to the practice of baptism under the Old Testament; and I am astonished to find him calling it “a Rabbinical custom, “Rabbinical baptism, Talmudical bathing” &c. intimating that such a practice had no existence, but in the reveries of the Talmud. On this supposition he says many severe things; only, however, to display his own weakness and the power of prejudice over the best.—In narrating this fact we have every reason to believe that
the

the Rabbins speak truth: as all the Jewish writers agree, both with respect to the existence, and circumstances of this practice, without a jarring vote. Moreover, had it been a falsehood, it could not have been invented by the Rabbins, the most inveterate enemies of Jesus Christ. It is well known, that the principal objection of the Jews against Jesus was, that he changed the law and customs of Moses. Now John Baptist and Jesus Christ practised proselyte baptism; which practice was made a standing law in the christian church. In this the ordinances of our Lord corresponded with the law of Moses, supposing the assertion of the Rabbins to be true; and is it credible, that his most malignant enemies would have invented a story, which, they themselves must have known, reflected no small honour on the character of Jesus of Nazareth?

But our faith in this matter does not depend on the veracity of the Rabbins, but on the word of God. * Israel were taken into the covenant by circumcision, baptism and sprinkling of blood; and strangers also were permitted to take hold of that covenant. Nor is it less certain that the divine law said "one law and

“one manner shall be for you and for the
 “stranger that sojourneth with you: as ye are,
 “so shall the stranger be before the Lord.”

Numb. xv. 15, 16. If you will admit, then, that Israel at any time obeyed the law of God, we are certain that proselytes were admitted to the covenant of Abraham, in the very manner narrated by the Rabbins, whether they had told us so or not. Shall we discredit the Rabbins because they speak according to the scriptures?—When they speak of *plunging* they are immediately dubbed oracles of truth: let them speak of infant-baptism, they, like the Cretans, are always liars!—So inconsistent with itself is the spirit of prejudice.

Nor does it avail to tell us, that this practice “is not so much as *once* mentioned in the records of inspiration.” ✕ We read of many

people becoming Jews, under the Mosaic œconomy, yet, during all that period, we do not find the *manner* of their admission so much as once mentioned in the Old Testament history.

—must we therefore conclude that they became Jews without circumcision? Or if you admit that Israel practised proselyte-circumcision, merely, on the authority of their un-inspired

inspired historians and the probability of the case, why not admit their practising proselyte-baptism on the same evidence?

I know no set of people so inconsistent as you Baptist-writers. Opposing the Quakers you strenuously insist on immersion in water, with acrimonious exactness, as essential to christianity. Writing against the Pædobaptists, again, we hear you speak of nothing but a spiritual seed, spiritual church and spiritual ordinances: even baptism becomes wholly spiritual; and consequently has not any thing carnal, such as water in it at all. It is a spiritual blessing you say, and does not put away the filth of the flesh—the very argument of the Quakers against the use of water in baptism. Why then such a pother about water, which in itself can only reach the flesh?

Again, speaking of our Lord's commission to baptize, you argue thus,—

Only he that is taught or believes is to be baptized;—an infant cannot believe; and therefore is not to be baptized.

But commenting upon Mark, xvi. 16. “He that believeth shall be saved”—you admit that infants, dying in infancy, are saved, not-

withstanding the connexion so expressly stated in this text between believing and salvation. So that your meaning is,

He that believeth shall be saved ;

Infants, cannot believe ; yet

Infants, dying in infancy, shall be saved.

Is not this fine Logic ! Since you have allowed “ all spiritual blessings ” to infants, I humbly think you might have added—“ and baptism among the rest. ” If the second text admits them into heaven without faith, I cannot see, how the first can be construed as excluding them from baptism.—You may unravel these inconsistencies at your leisure. I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

S I R,

ATTENDING to what has been said in the two preceding epistles, I hope you now see the

the weakness of your argument against infant-baptism, as if it proceeded upon the footing of a fleshly connection with a parent, or at least supposed that the subjects of the kingdom of God are to be distinguished by the faith of another.—We have seen, that circumcision proceeded on no such footing. God made known his covenant to Abraham, and put the token of it, not only in his own flesh, but in that of his children, because I know, says God, "that he will command his children, and "they shall keep the way of the Lord." The faith of the parent is here rationally considered as the faith of the child, as nothing can be more certain, than that a child will receive his first ideas from his parents, whether in religion or in any thing else: nor is it less certain that a believing parent will train up his child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; so that from a child he may know the scripture, which is able to make him wise unto salvation. Thus the church, in administering baptism to a child, considers him as of the faith: she is certain that he will profess the faith during non-age. He may afterwards, indeed, make

shipwreck of the faith; but so may one baptized in adult years.

Hence also you may see the propriety of administering baptism to the infants of believing parents. Only a believer can be supposed to educate his child in the faith of Christ. It would be folly to imagine that an infidel will do so; and hence as baptism is a christian institution, it cannot be administered rationally, but to such as are supposed to be of the household of faith.

I now proceed to obviate an objection, which I know will arise in your mind against my ideas of circumcision. If circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith, or of the everlasting covenant given to Abraham, and not of the law or old covenant, how came that rite to be abolished when the faith came, or this everlasting covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus? Why also was not baptism made void at the same time. Why retain and enforce the latter, and vacate the obligation of the former?

In answer to these questions, we must observe, that circumcision was principally intended to be a sign of the promise, that Messiah
should

should take flesh of the seed of Abraham, and
that in him all nations should be blessed. In
this view, circumcision served as a memorial of
the promise, and tended to keep alive the hope
of believers, and to support their faith in the
accomplishment of the promise in due time.
But when the seed came, and the promise was
fulfilled, it is easy to see, that circumcision,
the sign of his being about to come, could an-
swer no purpose. To continue the practice of
circumcision after this, would not only have
been useless, a mere mangling of the flesh to
no manner of purpose; but it must have a-
mounted to a denial of the truth of the gospel,
that the promise is fulfilled in Jesus of Naza-
areth. In this case, what was the sign of faith
before Christ came, must now be the most ob-
vious token of unbelief. Hence Paul boldly
tells the believing Jews in the Galatian church-
es, that whosoever is circumcised is a debtor
to do the whole law: that is, if any man insists
upon circumcision as necessary under the gos-
pel dispensation, he tacitly denies that Messiah
is come in the flesh, and so is yet under that
law which was intended to continue in force
till the faith should come. Circumcision had
its end and accomplishment in the incarnation
and

and death of Jesus Christ, and consequently must have vanished away of itself. It is now, then, a mere letter without the spirit; not only divested of divine authority, but contrary to it; a refusing to submit to the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and an attempt to obtain salvation by a mere work of pretended righteousness, which a man can do. With great propriety, then, does the apostle say, that if a man be circumcised with this view "Christ shall profit him nothing"—Seeking to be justified by the law, a mere external rite, "he has fallen from grace;" and cannot deserve even the name of a christian.

But with respect to baptism, the case was very different. It was never intended to signify the descent of Messiah from Abraham; and hence it did not receive its end and accomplishment by his incarnation, or taking flesh of Abraham. It was not properly a sign of the coming of Christ in flesh; but a sign of what he would do when he came. It testified that he would wash us from our sins in his own blood, that we might be kings and priests to God, being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. This is his work still:

and

and consequently it is proper that the sign of this action should continue to be administered to all who believe in Christ for the remission of sins. Accordingly it is continued in the church still, and is the sign of the same blessing now as formerly; only under the new dispensation it has something added to its signification,—it testifies that the purifier has come to fulfil his promise, or to “sanctify the people with his own blood.”

You now see the propriety of abolishing circumcision and retaining baptism under the New Testament administration.—I shall here add, that when it is said Baptism succeeds circumcision, it is not meant that the former answers every purpose now, which the latter subserved before Christ came. To prefigure our Lord's taking flesh of the seed of Abraham was the peculiar province of circumcision; in which office it had neither colleague nor successor. But considered as a *badge* of the household of faith; a *sign* of initiation into a society possessing the blessings promised to Abraham, and a token of the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, baptism serves the same purpose

or

or signifies the same thing with circumcision;
and so in these respects may be said to have
succeeded it.

I shall now conclude this epistolary correspondence with a few miscellaneous observations on what you have said in your *defence of Believer-Baptism*. In a note of the bottom of p. 27, 28. you reason thus—"As the Lord's Supper is among the *all things*, which the baptized disciples must be taught to observe, it is plain, that none are proper subjects of baptism but such as may immediately after receive the Lord's Supper. This is as if you had said, The passover was among the *all things* which a Jew was bound to teach his children diligently to observe, none, therefore, were proper subjects of circumcision, but such as might immediately receive the passover. Is not this fine reasoning! Every circumcised child had a right to eat the passover, as soon as he was capable of it; but can we from hence conclude that he was bound to eat it when eight days old?—Again, you add, "Baptism is the sign of the new birth, and the Lord's Supper of feeding upon Christ the true bread, and so the connection between these two ordinances"
 "and

“ and the things signified by them is as immediate and necessary, as that betwixt a person *having life* and his *taking food* to preserve it.”

Hence you conclude it absurd to deny the Lord's Supper to such as are baptized, or born into the church. Let us see now where this argument will lead us.—God gave flesh to man for food, to support the animal life in man. Now when a child is born into the world, he has the animal life; “ and so the connection betwixt his birth and eating flesh is as immediate and necessary, as betwixt a person *having life* and his *taking food* to preserve it.”

Is not this an immediate and necessary conclusion from the premises you have laid down? What then think you of your argument? Paul tells us, milk is for babes; but strong meat for men of riper years. In the same manner, although the Lord's Supper is a part of the food allotted for the children of God, yet as it is not the only vehicle for conveying the spiritual nourishment, we cannot conclude from hence, that every baptized person must immediately eat the Lord's Supper. Every circumcised child had a right to eat the passover; but this he was not bound to do, till arrived at

a certain age; although in the meantime he was to be carefully instructed in the nature, design, and obligation of this ordinance. So every baptized child has a right to eat the Lord's Supper: but as it is required of every observer of this institution, that he discern the Lord's body in its observance, none are bound to keep it till capable of such discernment. There is a great difference between a right to a privilege, and a capacity of immediate enjoyment of that privilege. It is incumbent, however, on such as have the charge of the education of such infants to consider them *as in the lord*, and to train them in the knowledge and discipline of Christ, that from childhood they may know the scripture, which are able to make them wise to salvation.

In a note at the bottom of p. you aim a stroke at a certain preface-writer, and through him at all congregational churches, who admit members to their communion, on the baptism they received in the national, or such as would be national churches; and it must be owned your arguments against this practice seem somewhat plausible; 1st, Ministers of such churches have no right from Christ to baptize

baptize * andly, Infants in these churches cannot be considered as the offspring of believing parents.

—Perhaps

* The Baptists themselves have now furnished other congregational churches with a sufficient answer to this objection. Of late a young man, excommunicated by the Baptists and who never had been vested with office-power in any church, took a fancy that he had a divine right to baptize. Duped by his pretensions, three people in Newburgh, without calling for his credentials, submitted to be plunged by him in the water of Tay. Soon after, however, doubting the validity of their baptism, they applied for admission to the Baptist-church in Dundee; who agreed to sustain their baptism as valid, and admitted these three candidates to their communion accordingly. Now as this same young man is considered by the Baptists as a child of the devil, or at least, as an heathen and publican, with whom they will not eat even a common meal, with what consistency can they exclaim against other congregational churches, for admitting members to their fellowship on the baptism received in a national church. Ministers in our national church have certainly as good a right to baptize as a man of no church, an heathen and publican. They scoffingly talk, indeed, of antichristian-sprinkling; but I humbly think this is as good as heathen-plunging. But it seems if the devil took a fancy to plunge men in the name of Jesus, his baptism must be good christian baptism. He once plunged a herd of swine in the water; and, alas, many a sow has been washed since, which has soon returned to her wallowing in the mire.

To

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—Perhaps, however, the following thoughts
may serve to invalidate the force of these ob-
jections

To give the devil his due, however, he seems to pay a greater deference to church-order and the name of Jesus Christ than some christians do. In Paul's time, we are told of certain vagabond Jews, who claimed a right to cast out devils, and in performing the ceremony they did it exactly after Paul's mode, *i. e.* in the name of Jesus. Acts, xix. 13, 14, 15, 16. "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus; saying, we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." But was the devil so weak as to admit their claim to so sacred an office? No; he called them scoundrels to their face—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Nor did he stay to dispute the case, but instantly the man, in whom the evil spirit "was, leapt on them and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Any Son of Sceva now, howbeit, if he but dips in the name of Jesus, may claim authority to wash away the sin of the world; and the validity of his claim be sustained.

That one's being baptized himself entitles him to baptize others has no authority from the scripture. John Baptist was never baptized himself: nor had any of the disciples assembled on the day of Pentecost ever been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. These had a commission to baptize others, but no order to be baptized themselves. A divine commission alone qualified them for this office.

jections, and to vindicate the conduct of congregational churches in this matter.

The twelve tribes of Israel had been separated from idols to maintain the knowledge and worship of the true God. But in the days of Rehoboam king of Judah, ten of these tribes, under the conduct of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, apostatized from the true faith and worship of Jehovah; setting up calf-gods at Dan and Bethel as objects of worship, and making priests for sacrifice, not of the order of Aaron — All in express contradiction to the law of

God. Here was a very corrupt church, subject to a mere king of this world, pretending a right to make laws for the better government of the church of God, as many have done since his time. Yet corrupt and antichristian as this church was, she seems still to have practised circumcision, according to the law of Moses; acting in this respect, like other churches of the kind, who retain as much of the divine law, as seems to suit their political views. Now when any person so circumcised returned from the error of his ways, and joined himself to the faithful tribes, worshipping the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem, do we ever read that the

validity of his circumcision was called in question ? So far as his parents had acted according to the divine law, so far their conduct was lawful and commendable. Hence we do not find them condemned for circumcising their children ; nor are the children condemned as uncircumcised, provided they kept the law of God when they had arrived at maturer age.

Yea, even among that people, God raised up Prophets, whom he honoured to vindicate his truth, and that in times of the deepest apostacy. Does he any where call these Prophets uncircumcised ?

This state of things, I hope you will allow, was a figure of the state of the church called christian, during the great apostacy so clearly predicted in the New Testament writings. In this case, as the conduct of the apostate church is strongly marked, that we may avoid the communion of any church we now see of the same characteristic, so the conduct of the church of the faithful must be also set before us as a pattern for our imitation : and consequently since profelytes from among the apostate tribes were admitted to the fellowship of the faithful at Jerusalem, without a question
about

about the validity of their circumcision, I own
I cannot see the inconsistency of admitting a
man to the purest church on earth without
question anent the validity of the baptism he
received in an apostate church, such as that
of Israel. At least I shall retain this opinion,
till I find it proved to be contrary to the dic-
tates of inspiration. But if any man thinks
that he has not received the baptism of Christ,
I blame not your society, nor any other chris-
tian church, for receiving him into communion
by baptizing him in the name of the Lord Je-
sus. For my own part, although I do not ap-
prove of national establishments of religion, yet
as I know I was baptized, under such an esta-
blishment, only in the way Christ has appoint-
ed by washing with water in the name of the
Father, Son and Holy Ghost, without the ad-
dition of any instituted circumstances, I feel
the obligation of that ordinance on my consci-
ence, engaging me to walk with him in new-
ness of life. Had Jesus commanded his disci-
ples to be rebaptized, I should cheerfully sub-
mit to his appointment: but as I cannot find
any such command in the sacred records, I rest
satisfied with his one baptism. If my parent

came under any unlawful obligations on that occasion, with these I have no concern. I approve of the act performed on me, and am conscious of the obligations Christ has annexed to it: and since he has not appointed a second baptism with water, I do not suppose that I would feel the obligations to walk in him more forcible on my heart, although I should be re-baptized a thousand and a thousand times.

X The Donatists, the most haughty, cruel and bigotted sect of antiquity, rebaptized every profelyte to their opinions from any other christian sect. This taught the convert to raise commotions in the state, and to persecute and anathematize his fellow-christians of other denominations. Like our more modern minister-Anabaptism, it put the sword of steel in his hand, but did not add a single grain-weight of godliness to his heart. What Jesus has not appointed in religion can only tend to more ungodliness.

Among the Donatists only you must seek for the first precedent for your present practice. It is vain to search the New Testament for any such example. There we find none re-baptized, who had once been baptized in the name of Christ. In the 3d century we find a dispute
in

in the church of Rome about the validity of Novatian's baptism, who had been sprinkled or anointed but not immersed. Yet it merits observation, that it never entered the minds of even the most zealous advocates for immersion to desire his re-baptism. Such an idea was left to be hatched by the Donatists and their offspring—the Anabaptists of later times.

The Greek church to this day is of the Baptist kind—She practises immersion, and that of the triple kind. Take a voyage to Russia, and you will find millions of Baptists, all dipped with the most ceremonious exactness. Yet they have not the effrontery to tell us, that immersion is essential to the baptism of Christ. Profelytes to their faith from among the heathen are generally admitted by immersion in a river: If however the person should be of too weak a constitution to undergo such a *violent initiation*, a barrel full of water is poured over his head three times. Where then shall we look for an example of that furious zeal for immersion which agitates the present Baptists? Water is a raging element: I see few rise out of it in the spirit of the lamb. When the winds of contention blow, how many a wild
beast

beast has risen out of the sea!—The Disciples of the Baptist still come up out of the waters with his rough garment of hair. The garment of Christ is humility, love, meekness and gentleness: and “as many as have been baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*.”

I shall now add a remark on your criticism on the word *Baptisma*. This you say denotes total immersion; and hence you boldly aver, that any thing less than a total immersion of the body in water is not an ordinance of Christ, neither in name nor thing, but a mere human ordinance. Let us see where this reasoning will lead you. The christian ordinance of bread and wine is expressed in Greek by the word *deipnon*, which in all the Dictionaries of that language signifies a *full meal* and often a *feast*. In this sense the church of Corinth understood it, when they eat and drunk and were drunken in their religious assemblies: and indeed on your plan of argument they were entirely in the right. Pity it is you was not then born! When Paul ~~re~~proved the Corinthians in so severe terms, telling them, “this is not to eat the Lords supper but their own,” as Jesus only gave one piece of bread to be distributed in
small

small morsels among his disciples, and a Cup in the same manner—you would have reasoned him down with criticisms on the Greek *deipnon*. A thousand times you would have told him this word signifies a full meal, a feast, and consequently any eating short of a belly-full is not the ordinance of Christ, either in name or thing but a mere human invention. Thus, you must have argued, or else you must give up with that idle gibberish you have so long deceived the simple with, in criticizing on the word baptism. If *deipnon*, denoting a religious ordinance, does not denote a full meal, but using a small portion of bread and wine, I defy you and all the baptists in the universe to prove, that *baptisma*, taken in a religious sense, signifies total immersion; or that a partial application of water to the body in the name of Christ is not the baptism, which he appointed.

I must be allowed, also, to express my abhorrence at your practice, in writing and speaking of the action of sprinkling or pouring water upon the initiated into the church of Jesus Christ. These actions you Baptists treat with scorn and contempt—a practice I must call
blasphemy

blasphemy against the words of the Holy Ghost.

Is not the baptism of the spirit called expressly the *pouring out* of the spirit? Acts, x. 45, xi. 19.—Speaking of the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, does not God say—“Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you and ye shall be clean?” Ez. xxxvi, 25. What, then, shall we think of a set of puny mortals, who can set their mouths against the heaven in their blasphemous talk, treating with scorn and ridicule the language of the divine spirit. “How long ye fools,” will ye love scorning! Furious for the baptism of John, may God grant you repentance unto life, and baptize you with the Holy Ghost—a baptism which you seem seldom to think of! Then ye shall no more utter great swelling words of vanity, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. Then you will no more deceive the hearts of the simple, teaching them to trust in a ceremonious immersion in water—a sanctification, which reaches only to the purifying of the flesh. You will tell them, that “by one spirit we are all baptized into one body.”—that they cannot be “buried with Christ” till they be “crucified with him:”

for

for "as many as are baptized into Christ, are
"baptized into his death." I am,

S I R,

Your friendly reprover,

Newburgh, November 20, 1787.

ALEXR. PIRIE.

C O N C L U S I O N.

AS a friend, on reading letter 4th and 5th of the above performance, has proposed objections against the doctrines therein advanced; and as similar difficulties may occur to other readers, I have judged it proper to offer the following thoughts, with a view to obviate these objections.

1st, It is asked, "was the earthly Canaan a
"figure of the heavenly inheritance *only* as to
"be possessed in a future state; and not also as
"presently entered into by believers under the
"gospel, as the apostle to the Hebrews, c. 4.
"seems

“seems to teach?” I answer, Paul does not seem to me to consider christians in this world as in any actual possession of the heavenly Canaan at all. He views them as in a state similar to that of Israel in the wilderness. “Here” says he “we have no abiding city; but we seek “one to come.” The rest he speaks of, c. iv. is only in the promise v. 1. of which we may seem to come short. He does not say we have entered into it already, but “let us labour “to enter into that rest.” v. 11. He says “indeed we who believe do enter into rest,” but this only describes the character of such as shall finally obtain the promise. In the wilderness Israel had the promise of rest; yet only such as believed the promise entered on the possession of that rest. In like manner believers now enjoy the promise in faith and hope, but not in actual possession.—Canaan, then, was only a figure of our future inheritance.

2ndly, “The inseparable connection made between the possession even of the earthly Canaan and faith in Christ seems to be very objectionable.” I answer, Paul expressly tells us that such as fell in the wilderness “could “not enter in because of unbelief;” and that
such

such as believed entered in : consequently nothing but unbelief could exclude any Israelite from that rest. But here it must be observed, that the object of that unbelief was not only the promise of Christ, but the promise of the temporal inheritance, or any other subordinate promise connected with these two leading ones. Thus when Israel murmured and rebelled against God in the wilderness, it was because "they despised the pleasant land—they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." Every act of disobedience originates in unbelief. Israel's not believing the temporal promise was a certain evidence of their not believing the promise of the Messiah. Had they believed the one they would also have believed the other.—As to the case of Moses and Aaron, it

was of a singular kind. It would seem they fell in the wilderness chiefly to serve some typical purposes, of which I cannot now speak particularly : yet still they fell on account of a particular act of unbelief, which prevented their entering Canaan at that time, although it will not hinder their entering on the possession of it in its heavenly state. Numb. xx. 12.

—The truth is, we can infer nothing concern-

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ing the eternal state of any Israelite from his falling in the wilderness.

Again "If Israel held possession of Canaan by faith, how came the believing remnant to be cast out at last with the unbelieving multitude?" I answer, the believers among Israel were not cast out of Canaan, but they went out, at the call of their master. History informs us, that not a christian was found in Jerusalem, when it was taken and destroyed by Titus. All of this description had left it, in obedience to the words of Jesus. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy-place, then let them that be of Judea flee into the mountains."

But to have just views of this matter we must observe, That Canaan as a country distinct from all others, and separated to be the residence of the holy seed, was never intended to be continued in that state after Messiah came. Canaan as possessed by Israel before Christ came was but a figure, specimen or sample of the Canaan given to Christ and the believing Israel under the gospel. The Canaan of Joshua extended from the Mediterranean

Sea

Sea to Jordan; the Canaan of Solomon from Jordan to the river Euphrates. This was the Canaan promised to Abraham in the first covenant given to him and his seed after the flesh, Gen. xv. But this Canaan, in its utmost extent, was trifling when compared with Canaan promised to him in the second covenant for an everlasting possession, Gen. xvii. By this grant he became "heir of the world," and not of a particular country only in it; a promise to be fulfilled only in his seed even Christ; of him it is said "His dominions shall extend from the river (Euphrates) to the utmost ends of the earth."

Canaan, then, in its first state, was only promised as a possession to Israel till Messiah should come, consequently when that period arrived, neither the carnal nor believing seed of Abraham had any more a claim to possess it, as an holy or seperated land. Christianity laid the ancient Canaan on a level with every other country on the earth; all of which now belongs to Christ, the seed of Abraham, who takes all the nations for his inheritance, according to the promise, and proposes to give all the believing seed a portion with him there-
in.

in. Thus the believing Jews never were cast out of the Canaan promised to Abraham as to be possessed by his seed according to the everlasting covenant. They were only called out from Canaan as the figure of the true, as an expression of their faith in the seed's being come, to whom was given the promise of Canaan in its full extent, and as an everlasting inheritance.

Here, however, it must be carefully observed, that although the whole earth is given to Christ as well as heaven, yet he has not as yet brought it into that state, in which he has promised it as an inheritance to his seed. The Canaanite and the curse still dwell in the land. But Israel cannot inherit it till there be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts, and every curse shall cease. This can only be in the new state of the heavens and the earth, which the gospel teaches us to expect, according to the promise.

In the mean time, christians are on the earth as Israel were in the wilderness. In the wilderness, the deserts of Arabia, Israel had the promise of an inheritance, the object of hope, not of possession. There they had no continuing

ning abode: they were but sojourners, seeking a place of rest in a better country. In terms of like import does Paul describe the state of christians in the present world—"Here we have no abiding city; but we seek one to come. The Lord will bring me to his heavenly kingdom."

The scripture sets our present state in another point of view, Abraham and his family were long in the land of Canaan; but he "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country;" and had not a foot of property in it, save a burial-place, he purchased with his money. Such is the state of his believing seed under the gospel. Canaan was first to Abraham the land of sojournings, although he was afterward to receive it for an inheritance: and earth is such to his believing seed in their present state. The earth as well as heaven is promised to them;—"the meek shall inherit the earth:" yet it is only afterwards to be received by them as an inheritance. At present they confess with their fathers that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, seeking a better country, even an heavenly, where God has prepared for them a city—a
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, which shall in due time come down from God out of heaven. Then shall they have it in sure possession, and all shall dwell therein, who love his blessed name.

Lastly, It has been thought that I lose sight of the connection between the temporal and spiritual promise, after the coming of Christ in the flesh; whereas Paul says that "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of this life and that which is to come." In reply to this, I have already observed, that christians under the gospel are in the same state with Abraham, when a sojourner in Canaan and Israel in the wilderness. Abraham had both promises, although he died, not having received the things promised. These were the objects of faith, not of immediate possession. His faith, however, was a present good: it gave a relish to all the enjoyments, and supported him amidst all the afflictions of life. Moreover, he had the promise of the divine presence to be with him in the meantime, to furnish him with all the necessities of life, to protect him from dangers and to comfort him in trials. This excited in his heart sensations of bliss, to which the Canaan-
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ites were *utter* strangers. This made the pilgrim far more happy than the possessors of the land.—The same is true of Israel in the wilderness. While God was their shepherd, they could not want either aliment or protection. Trusting in the promise of the future inheritance, they were assured they should not lack any good thing for the present enjoyment. —This is the case of christians still. Seeking first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, their Lord has promised to add to them every thing conducive to present happiness. Conscious that their God will not leave them, nor forsake them, having food and raiment they can be therewith content. The blessing of the Lord makes happy, and adds no sorrow. The assured hope, too, of future glory fills them with peace and joy; and teaches them to rejoice not only in prosperity but in tribulations also.—It is thus godliness has the promise of this life: yet this is not the promised inheritance. Our faith still looks beyond the grave, and is the evidence of unseen things. Earth is now the scene of our pilgrimage; but the happy day approaches when Christ shall appear

pear with his kingdom. Then the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in an abundance of peace.

F I N I S.



